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CHRIST AND THE JEWISH LAW.

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CHRIST
AND THE JEWISH LAW.

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PREFACE.

THE importance of our subject is very generally admitted by competent theologians. Holtzmann, in papers frequently referred to below, makes allusion to a late work of Bruno Bauer's, and speaks in that connection of "the high significance, which belongs to Jesus' attitude towards the Law, in regard to His dignity as founder of a religion;" and Bassermann, the author of a brief but laborious commentary on Matt. v. 17-20, expresses himself as follows: "All admit the importance of this question," *viz.*, the question how Jesus felt and taught regarding the Mosaic Law, "not only for a right understanding of the life and person of Jesus, but for a right understanding of the whole Christian religion. Rightly," he adds, "does Weisse call it a vital question for framing our conception of the Divine revelation made to us in Christ." Yet, so far as I am aware, there is no treatment of our subject, either in German or English, on a scale adequate

to its importance. Perhaps the following pages may call attention to it.

An apology is due for the absence of textual criticism. This book can make no claim to original scholarship, though I have tried to keep step with the results of scholarship. In Germany, it would be impossible to handle such a subject except in connection, not with textual criticism only, but with critical theories of the origin of the Gospels. And it is most legitimate to determine as exactly as possible the revealing facts and sacred words, on a sounder system than that of Gospel Harmony. But there are drawbacks. The next comer has a new criticism, and sweeps away at a stroke the underpinning upon which the superstructure of his predecessor rests. If we take our stand on the actual Gospel narratives, we cannot be so quickly despatched.

The reader will not need to be told that I am under greater obligations to Ritschl than to any other writer. I have not indeed been able to follow his views upon "Christ and the Mosaic Law" in his *Enstehung der altkatholischen Kirche*. But from that book, and from his great work on Justification, I have derived suggestions and promptings so numerous that a detailed confession would be

tedious. Perhaps it is right to add, that the following pages nevertheless are not an utterance of discipleship. Dr. Ritschl is not to be made responsible for the crudities of my criticism. Nor am I to be held assenting to the negations of his theology.

But, while following the best available guidance, I have not aspired to the cold academic exactness of a monograph. Such correctness is dearly bought by ignoring the questions which lie around every special topic. The importance of our subject is partly apologetic. It constitutes a distinct element in the argument for Christ. But it must also have an outlook towards dogmatic as well as practical questions ; and, while it would be senseless to think of deciding such questions incidentally, it would be equally senseless to ignore them. Our contact with the words and deeds of Christ may well help us to restate the pressing problems of theory or of conduct ; perhaps it may put the beginnings of a clue into our hands.

I have used the Revisers' Greek Text, and generally quoted their version.

R. M.

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CHAPTER I.

THE JEWISH LAW AND MODERN DISTINCTIONS.

CHAPTER I.

THE JEWISH LAW AND MODERN DISTINCTIONS.

IN the time of Christ the Jewish Law was the distinguishing badge and chief interest of His nation. Whether it date, in its completed form, from the age of Moses or from that of Ezra, it embodied in Christ's time, as it has ever since done, all the essential features in the faith and life of the children of Abraham. A good Jew accepted the Law; one who broke it, or carried men beyond it, must be more or less than a good Jew. The narrowing of national interests—the loss of freedom, and the sleep or apparent death of prophecy—had only made the nation turn with intenser earnestness to the study and observance of its law. Even the Sadducees, who accepted no other part of the Old Testament, allowed the authority of the Pentateuch. Its ritual dominated the life, the hopes, the theological thought of the nation.

To contemporary minds, who had grown up in such an atmosphere, the Law doubtless seemed a homogeneous unity. One fact might already have suggested a different view,—the fact that the Pharisaic party supplemented the written law by a growing mass of authoritative traditions, while the Sadducees refused to accept more than the canonical code. Yet these

added traditions, in their lower sort, were similar to the Levitical code: they were of the Law, legal. Modern students, however, cannot understand the characteristics of the Law, or the attitude of Jesus Christ towards it, unless they dissect the Law into its constituent groups.

1. The kernel of the Jewish Law is that Decalogue which has passed among theologians by the name of the Moral Law. And, unquestionably, moral teaching, or a religious teaching which is also moral, is central to the whole Law. In all its kinds of literature, and through all its ages, the Old Testament religion bore witness for righteousness. We, of course, from a Christian standpoint, notice limitations and defects in the ethics of Old Testament revelation, and endeavour in various ways to account for them; but there is no question that, within the community of Israel, God's teaching was truly ethical. This ethical character appears both in the Law and elsewhere, both within and outside the Pentateuch. It is not peculiar to that Book of the Covenant to witness for righteousness, nor can we say, apart from special study, what juridical stamp the moral teaching of the Law may bear, as contrasted with that of the Prophets, the Psalms, or the Wisdom literature. In the days of Jesus, however, the Law distinctively was the accepted pattern of moral life. His teaching developed Old Testament morality; but it certainly did not involve a breach with the moral law.

2. The morality of the Pentateuch was religious; it taught not only right conduct among men, but a right relation between man and God. Now religion in all communities, and especially in early societies, expresses

itself in outward ceremonial acts. The religion of Israel formed no exception to this rule: it had a large number of ceremonies, which, naturally, were specially adapted for a legal code. In point of fact, this code, at whatever time it may have arisen, made these ceremonies its own. One might reverence the Prophets and think little of ritual; one could not reject ritual, or be indifferent to it, without breaking with the Law. On the other hand, indifference to ritual—advance beyond the Law—was not necessarily an advance beyond the teaching of the Prophets.

3. The Law had thus at least two elements. It was in part morally religious, in part ceremonially religious. But, since the code was intended to guide the whole life of the nation, it could not but contain another element, partly separate from both. The Law was a statute law. It forbade not vice only, but crime. And, although, being a unity, the Law might treat every vice as a crime, it is important for us, who are accustomed to other ideas, to observe that some of the sins this Law denounced were merely civil offences; some of its duties mere civil obligations; one of its purposes to regulate national institutions. In this character, the Law certainly was not singular in Hebrew history. So long as salvation "was of the Jews," every religious teacher was concerned to regulate national life. Isaiah was a statesman. Jeremiah himself, the prophet of national self-effacement, was a king's councillor. The "judges" of the troubled early times, while they possessed spiritual authority, were, as a matter of course, reformers and rulers. To break with this element in the Law, to claim obedience in religious matters, while declining to regulate civil polity, was not only to break

with the code of the Pentateuch, but to burst the spiritual limits of the Old Testament.

4. We have now seen three separate elements which were united in the Jewish Law. In modern language, it governed society, the Church, and the State. But we have yet to consider, if not a fourth part, a fourth aspect of the Law, most important perhaps of all. The Law was the monument of the religion of Revelation; and its observance secured religious fellowship with God. This is most usually expressed by calling the Law God's covenant, a term familiar to theology, and used in its Latin dress by everyone in speaking of the Old Testament. No particular commandments can be brought under this head. All commandments required either moralities, or ceremonies, or non-religious civil observances and civil sanctions of morality. But religion in Israel was concerned with all three classes of laws. The covenant was kept only when the State was well ordered, when the national worship was well carried out, and when righteousness prevailed and triumphed.

We have now ended the analysis of the Jewish Law; but it is important to add some remarks about the Law as a whole.

1. We must remember that the Law was a unity. The three classes of laws which we have discovered were never separated in the minds of any who were under that Law. Something of the character of each tinctured both of the others, while the sanctity of religion rested upon all. Morality, tested by law and developed in a multitude of rules, seemed to be sufficiently safeguarded by the tests of external action, if indeed statutes did not exhaust it. Ceremony, com-

manded by God, claimed no second place in men's respect. The law of the land was not based professedly on Utility or on abstract Justice, but on God's will, and on principles of morality beyond which that age could discern none higher. All ceremonies were parts of this law. All laws were means of grace. We shall not understand Jesus' intellectual environment, or the opinions of those He dealt with, if we do not bear in mind this—to us—bewildering interchange of qualities, this chameleon colour which seems, under our very eyes, to alter every popular observance or sacred rite into something different, if not opposite in its nature.

2. It throws much light on the Jewish Law, when we remember that the covenant was binding not upon individuals, but upon Israel as a whole. Because the nation was in covenant with Jehovah, the individual Jew felt himself under obligation to serve Jehovah; it was as a member of the chosen race that he enjoyed access to God in the national or in private acts of worship. "Thou shalt," in the Ten Commandments, is addressed to the whole community. Prophecy, as well as law, builds upon the solidarity of the race. Hosea's final appeal is, "O *Israel*, return unto the Lord thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity" (xiv. 1). Isaiah placed the beginning of religious amendment in social and political reform;—the two were then identical. Indeed, the prophet was not a pastor with a cure of souls; he had a public mission. And, throughout Old Testament theology, Jehovah and Israel are as inseparable correlates as God and the Kingdom of God[1] in the Synoptic teaching of Jesus.

[1] Appendix A., The Kingdom of God.

Even in Isa. xl.—lxvi., where we are carried beyond Israel the nation, beyond the religious "remnant," to the subtler and deeper conception of the servant of Jehovah, this servant is still addressed as "Jacob my servant, and Israel whom I have chosen" (xliv. 1). Only in the Wisdom literature, the least exclusively or directly religious of the literatures of the Old Testament, and perhaps in prophecy for a little time after the days of Jeremiah, do we find appeals to the individual as such, or an endeavour to start from individual salvation as the basis of religious hope.[1] Jeremiah lived in the downfall of the state. When the state was reconstituted as a city and as a Church, after the Exile, there was no doubt, whatever failed to be restored, that the covenant character of religion was fully restored, and the individual's welfare again regarded as dependent on the faithfulness of the community.

From this archaic principle almost all the peculiarities of the Jewish Law may be deduced. In other words, Christ's change of the Old Testament religion is in almost all points an advance not only beyond the Law, but beyond the Dispensation. It is not a mere retrogression to the period before the Law, whether, with the old tradition, we call that period the patriarchal, or whether, with the newer criticism, we call it the prophetic age. Christianity was a new spirit that transcended both the Law and the Prophets—a fulfilment not of the commandment only, but of the promise.

[1] The Psalms, which are the religious response to the nation's God, necessarily breathe a personal religion; but even in them personal piety is generally set in the framework of covenant blessings.

Hence it matters little to Christian theology, so far as the present writer can see, at what time the Old Covenant passed into the form of the Levitical code. Nothing would be lost if the advanced critical hypothesis were proved, and little or nothing gained.

It would be a different thing if we were forced to adopt the naturalistic assumption of the origin of the Old Covenant by development from ethnic superstitions. But that assumption stands on quite a different footing from the higher criticism's analysis of the Law. It is only natural that the new methods of historical science should trace a living development *within* the Old Testament religion. "When God made the stones," said the quarryman to young David Livingstone, "He put the shells in them." So tradition treated the Pentateuch; God had "put the shells" into it; code upon code were supposed to have been hurled on the top of each other at the time of the Exodus. Geology has had its way; why may not history demand an equal liberty? From science to materialism, however, is a leap of blind faith; and from tracing development within the Old Covenant to infer a development of the Old Covenant out of dead paganism, needs the blind faith of infidel dogmatism. Whenever the New Testament speaks of Israel's past, it has to do with the religion of the Old Testament. Whenever the Old Testament itself speaks, it moves within the sphere of assured faith; Jehovah has chosen Israel; Israel is to be loyal to Jehovah; and these certainties appear bound up with the keen antique national self-consciousness. The beginnings of Christianity in the Old Testament depended upon the identifying of a moral and religious consciousness, and therefore, of an at least potentially spiritual doctrine of

God, with the race consciousness of Israel. No doubt there was indefinite room for development in the conception of what constituted moral loyalty to God; and no doubt history betrays signs of conduct which in our view is hard to conciliated with such a faith. But without the Covenant (whether so named or not), and without the ascription of moral character to Jehovah, it is hard to see how development was possible. That the prophets spontaneously invented Jehovahism, and palmed it off upon the people, will certainly not be the solution of the Old Testament problem. We must protest against identifying such religious radicalism with critical views on the structure of the Pentateuch. Unhistorical rationalism of this sort is the worst master in history. The New Testament is, indeed, in Hegelian language, the "truth" of the Old. But to go outside of the Covenant, in order to explain it by other things, is to try to explain light by darkness.

Even apart from such theological error, we are easily tempted to exaggerate the importance of the change "from status to" covenant. If religion, being the affair of the nation, were codified in a law, then—we might say—morality must be enforced as statute-law, and piety as an outward institution, while a man's omission of any religious duty must be punished by the State, in order to avoid complicity in his offence. But codification was hardly needed to bring about these results. Code or no code, it was as much matter of course with ancient nations that religion was an affair of public life, as it is with us that religion concerns primarily the personal life. That ancient belief, when a certain limit of heterodoxy was passed, made persecution a necessary thing even where there was no covenant-code to direct

the nation. Similarly, code or no code, custom enforced with a religious sanction many institutions that were not statutory, or that were not so as yet. The growth of the caste system of Hindustan illustrates this beyond the religion of Revelation. But much that is similar is seen in Israel. "According to Isa. xxviii. 23, *seq.*, the rules of good husbandry are a 'judgment' taught to the ploughman by Jehovah, part of Jehovah's Torah (ver. 26[1]),"and Hebrew philosophy regarded politics not as an "inductive" science, or as the means of securing the greatest happiness of the greatest number, but as a department of Divine wisdom (Prov. viii. 15). Living as we do in an age of rationalism, when every traditional usage is challenged equally with every inherited belief, and has to prove its usefulness in order to live, we find it hard to imagine a state of mind, in which progress, or reform of custom, would have seemed not so much wrong as ridiculous, impossible, inconceivable. There are still survivals of this temper; but the vain modern world is wilfully blind in presence of the tyranny of custom. We see, then, that the religious value of statute law, and the enforcement by penalty of religion and of ethic, owed little of their stingency to codification. The Law may have fixed and hardened these features of every ancient society; it did not create them. But the Law is what is important for us, as the form in which the Old Covenant met the eyes of Jesus. Finally, we should err if we thought that the Law, which enforced morality and statute-law with even-handed justice, in doing so reduced the demands of ethic to external propriety. It may in many instances have

[1] W. R. Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 335.

tended to do this, but neither Old nor New Testament will allow that it actually or designedly did so. And rightly; for this blending of the outward and inner life was not due to a wish to measure the inner by the outer, but to the fact that conscience and personal religion had never yet been disentangled from good citizenship and loyal patriotic piety. Both prophecy and law, in their characteristic manners, wielded the social ideal of the Old Covenant for religious ends.

3. This social organisation had suffered loss in one important respect. The nation had lost its independence—finally, hopelessly. But the Romans, who wished to rule an empire and happened to spread a uniform civilisation, allowed their dominions to be as multiform as they pleased, provided they were obedient. The Jews accordingly retained their law, and, with the one damaging flaw, laboured assiduously to please God by organising their community as the Law required. And, if the scribes added tradition to the written code, their tradition claimed to be the necessary completion of the Law in the Law's own spirit.

Perhaps it may seem that we have been perverse in stating the Jewish Law first in detail, as it appears to us; then synthetically, as it appeared to the Jews themselves in the age of Christ. Really, this was unavoidable. The divisions of the Law, its parts and aspects, are not arbitrary; they are not random generalisations; they represent the distinctions which we are forced to make in studying the attitude of Jesus to the Law, and His teaching regarding it. Christianity compels us to speak of "moral" and "ceremonial" laws, with an implied disparagement of the latter in comparison with

the former; Christianity shows us that the sphere of statutory institutions is not the religious sphere; Christianity suggests that "the Covenant" of Moses and of Micah is not necessarily the only dispensation of God's grace. In a word, by virtue of Christianity and of modern civilisation, we read the Bible with all these distinctions ready-made in our minds; we should only make bad worse by ignoring the fact; we should make the difficulties of historical study not lighter, but greater. It is impossible to think ourselves back into the position from which the Law seemed a unity, Israel the only people of God, and ceremony a Divine thing equally with deeds of righteousness; if we could succeed in doing so, we must strip our minds bare of what eighteen centuries of Christian life have gained for mankind.

The Law, then, appears to Christian readers ethical, ceremonial, statutory, and, throughout, religious. In studying Christ's position in regard to it, we must begin by asking, What was Jesus' own conception of the Jewish Law?

CHAPTER II.

CHRIST'S CONCEPTION OF THE LAW.

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IN the Synoptic Gospels we find, occasionally, at rare intervals, plain records of Christ's own declarations as to the purpose of His life. In Matt. v. 17-20 we have such a passage; a classical though solitary declaration by our Lord of the bearing of His work and teaching upon the Jewish Law. "I came not," He said, "to destroy the law or[1] the prophets;" not to destroy, but to fulfil. It is plain what Jesus means when He says that He is not come to destroy the Law, but in what sense is He to fulfil it? To fulfil it as a type or prediction is fulfilled by the antitype, or to fulfil it as a loyal subject fulfils the command of his king? The following verses give the answer: "Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass away from the law, till all things be accomplished. Whosoever, therefore, shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whosoever shall do and teach them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." If the Law is to continue "till heaven and earth pass away," if com-

[1] Grammatically equivalent, in a negation, to "the law and the prophets." Ritschl, note in *Alt-Kath. Kirche*, p. 36; Weiss, *in loc.*; Bassermann, *ib.*, and the authorities he cites.

mandments issuing from it are to be taught in the kingdom of God, it cannot be thought of as a temporary dispensation foreshadowing that kingdom, but as a decree, or revelation of righteousness, to which Jesus Himself is to be subject. Yet, on the other hand, this interpretation does not seem to do justice to all that is said in the passage. Jesus, who treats as a natural question the doubt whether He is to destroy or to fulfil the Law, cannot regard Himself merely as one of its subjects, among others; He implies that the attitude which He sustains towards the Law is of unique importance for it. And, similarly, the last clause of ver. 18, "till all things be accomplished," seems to imply, that the Law is not only the revealed norm of relations between God and men, but also something which, though its precepts cannot pass or be lessened, yet looks for a time fulfilment as types and predictions do. In other words, "the law and the prophets" seem to be regarded by Jesus not only as declaring God's eternal will, but as looking for a peculiar satisfaction to Himself and His kingdom. Let us verify or correct this impression, by studying, in other passages, Christ's conception of the Law.

There are three other passages in which Jesus speaks explicitly of the nature of the Law: Matt. vii. 12, xi. 13 (Luke xvi. 16), xxii. 35 (Mark xii. 28; cf. Luke x. 25). It is remarkable that in all of them we find the same combination of "the law and the prophets," as if they formed one idea in the mind of Jesus. Even when He is asked, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" He adds to His answer the remark, "On these two commandments hangeth the whole law, *and the prophets*." There are other passages which illustrate

this phraseology, though they contain nothing that need detain us. In the parable of Dives and Lazarus we find the equivalent, "Moses and the prophets" (Luke xvi. 29); in a narrative passage of the same Gospel (xxiv. 27) we find "Moses and all the prophets," and, in the same chapter (ver. 44), in a saying of the risen Christ, "the law of Moses and the prophets, and the psalms."[1] All of these[2]—the last, with most probability—are, perhaps, to be viewed as names[3] for the Old Testament according to its accepted divisions, Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa. We may derive some instruction from reading "Old Testament" for "the law and the prophets" in each of our passages. Still, the question recurs, why are the law and the prophets the divisions chosen for habitual mention? His contemporaries called the Old Testament "the law" because they regarded it as fundamentally a law; why does Christ prefer to remind us that the old revelation was given by law and by prophets? For three reasons: to extol the prophets; to bring the law into its right place; to give it its true interpretation. Jesus' language shows us His thought going behind the Law to the revelation; it indicates that, just as prophecy awaited fulfilment, so the Law must yield to a higher dispensation; for our Lord

[1] Cf. also John i. 45; Acts xiii. 15 and xxiv. 14; Rom. iii. 21, —see p. 32.

[2] Denied by W. R. Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, p. 165.

[3] In the Fourth Gospel, and in other passages of the Synoptics, "the law," or "Moses," is often referred to; but we learn nothing from any of these instances. In them, "the law" is either the name of the Pentateuch, or of the Old Testament sacred writings generally, or else it is used for the outward system under which the people lived.

knew Himself to be the final revelation of God. His reverence for the prophets expressed itself, as did that of all the deeper piety of His age, in finding foreshadowings of the Christ, not in isolated passages, but everywhere in the Old Testament (see Matt. xii. 39 and Luke xi. 29; Matt. xvii. 12 and Mark ix. 12; Luke xviii. 31, also xxiv. 25, 44, etc.; John i. 45, v. 39, 46). But, by associating the prophets with "the law," as well as by the definitions He gives of their joint contents, Jesus shows that He regarded such foreshadowing or foretelling as itself consisting fundamentally in the Law. The Law had required love and perfect devotion to God's glory; it was revealed in the Old Testament as an ideal, but realised only in Christ Himself. In other words, Christ affirms that He is come to fulfil the ideal of the Old Covenant, as published in the Law and promised by the Prophets.

Jesus gives two definitions of the contents of the Law. In one it is said to command love to God and men; the other, more briefly expressed, speaks only of unselfishness among men (Matt. vii. 12); we know it as the Golden Rule. It is characteristic[1] of Jesus' teaching to treat this as practically equivalent to the fuller statement. He did not think that love to God was of less consequence than love to men; He knew that kindness toward men was a more definite and a sufficiently full test of character among His servants. Of separating the two He could never dream. These two passages tell us what Jesus thought of the Law: since He saw in it the revelation of a rule of love, it is easy to understand how He should have affirmed, that, while heaven and earth lasted, one jot or tittle

[1] See below, ch. viii.

should in no wise pass away from it. We feel by instinct that that statement cannot have been affirmed of the ceremonial details of the Law; now we see how superfluous it is to bring it into any connection with them. If Jesus habitually thought of the whole Law and Prophets as commanding what He says they commanded, ceremony was as good as non-existent for Him. It is plain, too, in what sense Jesus was come to fulfil every jot and tittle of the Law. He was come to live a life of love, perfect in the patience of its detailed obedience, faithful in that which was least as well as in what was great,—a life of love with all the heart and soul and mind towards the Father,—a life of absolute self-surrender for the good of men. And, evidently, if this be Christ's fulfilment of the Law, there is no reason why such a fulfilment should end the Law. As a Divine example, and as a constraining moral power, Christ's fulfilment is fitted to reproduce itself till heaven and earth pass away.

The third passage is given in two distinct forms. According to Luke's version, which is the simpler, it does not state the contents of the Law and the Prophets, but gives a new view of their formal function. They were in force, we gather, till the ministry of John the Baptist; but the teaching of John and Jesus has put them out of date; now "the kingdom of God is preached, and every man entereth violently into it," while the Head of the members of that kingdom is greater than the greatest of the Prophets. This recalls us to that view of the early revelations of God, in which they rank as temporary dispensations, because unfulfilled except in a better time of clearer revelation. The verse would thus form the complement to the

summaries of the Law; together they would make up the teaching of Matt. v. 17-20.—If Luke's version is clearer, the version in Matthew is more generally accepted; and by analogy it has the stronger claim to acceptance. It need cause us no difficulty, for we have learned that the predictive aspect is essentially involved in Jesus' view of the Law and the Prophets. Indeed, our account of the phrase enables us particularly well to explain why the "Law" as well as the "Prophets" should be said to "prophesy until John." If this is the more correct record of Jesus' words, He speaks here of the Johannine and post-Johannine period as a fulfilment of prophecy, and as a fulfilment, in the same sense, of the ideal sketched in the Law. On this view, Christ and His kingdom are represented as the perfecting of former ages, but the displacement of former standards is not explicitly affirmed by our Lord.

A confirmation of our view of the phrase "law and prophets" in Christ's teaching is found in His use of a correlative phrase, "prophets and righteous men." This occurs twice. In one passage (Matt. x. 41), all that is indicated, so far as our study is concerned, is that Jesus is greater than either prophets or saints of old,—a truth strongly expressed in the almost Johannine ver. 40. Another *quasi* parallel is Matt. xxiii. 34, where Jesus declares that He is to send "prophets and wise men and scribes" to the people,—a grouping which may, perhaps, recall to us "the law and the prophets and the psalms." But the passage of value for us is Matt. xiii. 17, where Christ is expounding the parable of the sower. He tells the disciples they are happy beyond all men, since "many prophets and righteous men"—a phrase evidently more original than the common-

place "prophets and kings" of Luke x. 24—"have desired to see the things which" the disciples saw, "and saw them not, and to hear the things which" the disciples heard, "and heard them not." The parallel here is manifest. The prophets are those who declared God's will and pointed men to the Fulfiller. The "righteous men" are those who, all too inadequately, kept God's commandments, and who yearned to see a better fulfilment, to hear a clearer and fuller message from God. What both of these classes vainly longed for, the disciples of Christ possess. Righteousness is fulfilled in a life before their eyes; it lives, as well as speaks, in words that they hear. The kingdom of God is no longer hoped for; it has come to them.

We are thus able to explain why Jesus should have spoken with unqualified endorsement of the Law. We explain it on the ground that He ignored ceremony, or took the Law in its absolute religious value, giving it the meaning which it had as a revelation of God, and in which, of course, it had permanent worth,—piercing through externals to the ethical content of the Old Dispensation. This explanation we give not capriciously or arbitrarily, but on the ground of parallel passages, which show us how Jesus habitually thought of the Law and Prophets; as well as on the ground of the whole context, which, throughout this chapter, betrays no reference to ceremonies. The eye sees what it brings with it capacity to see. And thus, while scribes and Pharisees, in all honesty and earnestness, could find in the Law only a manual of religious etiquette, we should scarcely learn from the words of Jesus that a Book of Leviticus existed in the Old Testament. He found, in the Law, love to God and men. He did not rest upon

ceremonial details; He was able to forget them, and to speak only of the permanent kernel of the old lawgiving. And thus He was able to take up the attitude of one, who, though He might reform, was no revolutionary, —who was more loyal to the heart of the Law and of prophecy than the most slavishly pedantic of the scribes, —who was a more authentic interpreter than they of the Old Covenant, because He stood in the line of revelation, and carried on the prophetic work, which had been checked by the Pharisee spirit, with its vulgar externalising misinterpretations. We must not for a moment forget that Jesus appealed from present degeneracy to former messengers of God. He laboured within the community of those who enjoyed Divine fellowship.

What, then, is the meaning of *destroying* "the Law and the Prophets," as thus understood? The reference can only be to an antinomian movement. And in what connection could such a movement insinuate itself into the life of the Christian society? A suggestion is offered to us by ver. 20, where we find Jesus teaching His hearers that, unless their righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, they cannot enter His kingdom. From ver. 21, *sq.*[1] it appears that this "righteousness of the Pharisees" means the righteousness required in their teaching; and, as the questions discussed in these verses are all moral questions, the moral aspect of Pharisee teaching must be in view. Now—to anticipate a little—we know[2] that Jesus refused the authority of Pharisee tradition. And, from what precedes the Sermon on the Mount in Luke, as well as from the

[1] *Infra*, ch. iii., p. 50.
[2] *Infra*, ch. iii., p. 42, *sq.*

parallels in Mark, in whose Gospel the gap left by the Sermon may perhaps be detected,[1] we see that the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees was already raging. The question of fasting had indeed been thrust on Jesus' notice, and a decision required of Him.[2] Now it is plain on a moment's reflection, that grave moral danger must have attended the overthrow of the ruling moral authority of the day. Such a change is always difficult. The Christian Church itself had to fight in the early centuries against Gnosticism; the Reformation suffered from Anabaptist excesses; and imperfect honesty is a favourite charge against mission converts even on the part of comparatively good-natured critics. This consideration leads us to hear in our Lord's "think not" much more than a rhetorical exordium; and the severe gravity of the whole subsequent exposition confirms us in thinking that He had detected a real moral danger. Certainly the most effective safeguard against such a danger, in the case of true disciples, was the assurance that Christ had come to keep the Law. That this keeping was the true "fulfilment," or bringing to currency, of the Law, would be in nothing inconsistent with such a lesson.

A different sense was given to ver. 17 by the favourite interpretation "perfect" for πληρῶσαι (De Wette, Meyer, Ritschl). But this view, as Bassermann well shows, is inconsistent with the verses that follow. It need not be, could we hold with Ritschl that Jesus in ver. 18 speaks of jots and tittles of the νόμος πληρωθείς; but such an assumption is an exegetical device of the

[1] *Viz.*, at Mark iii. 19, 20. So Ewald, who is followed by Holtzmann, Bassermann.

[2] *Infra*, ch. iii., p. 43; ch. vi., p. 121.

kind by which anything can be made to mean anything. The signification "perfect" for πληρῶσαι has, however, lately been revived (Holtzmann,[1] Bassermann, Dr. Paul Feine[2]) in connection with a careful critical analysis of the Sermon on the Mount, which proposes to strike out as spurious vers. 18 and 19 (after "Gfrörer, Köstlin, Strauss, Hilgenfeld, Baur, Hase," according to Bassermann). Now we can have little objection to the doctrine thus put in Jesus' mouth. If, in the cardinal passage dealing with the Old Testament, He teaches that He is come to "perfect" the Law and the Prophets, we need seek no further for information on the subject of Jesus' view of the Law; and many dangers are averted. But the criticism involved is a different matter. We shall frankly do our best to avoid admitting that the Gospels have been subjected to Judaising interpolations, though we must yield to proof if proof were forthcoming. Here, however, it is proposed to omit ver. 18, precisely the one verse in the passage for which a second evidence, the witness of Luke (xvi. 17), can be quoted. It is rejoined that this saying is Rabbinical, that it could not be borrowed by the Rabbis from Jesus, that it must therefore be spurious in the Gospels. On this point we shall speak immediately. But, indeed, the "perfecting" of the Law, in conjunction whether with the exegesis of Ritschl or with the criticism of Bassermann, appears to the present writer by no means the category under which Christ would have summed up the grave and stern teaching which follows. It is surely not a correct account of historical Christianity, nor yet of the purpose of Christ,

[1] See papers in the *Jahrb. für Prot. Theol.*, 1878.

[2] In the *Jahrb. für Prot. Theol.*, Jan. 1885.

to say that the New Dispensation is a heavier law than the imperfect law of the preceding age. On the other hand, if He is guarding against antinomianism, it is natural that Christ should use all available means to emphasise the unchallengeable purity of His kingdom.

Another once favourite interpretation of πληρῶσαι was that which made it include both obedience to Law and fulfilment of predictions.[1] It is hardly necessary to refute this view. Neither logic nor grammar will support it. A practised dogmatist might use words in such a double-barrelled sense; an orator, never. Besides, whatever force the view might derive from the last clause of ver. 18 is covered by our own view, recognising as it does that Christ finds a prediction embodied in the very existence of the Old Testament moral law.

We now turn to ver. 18; and we may be asked in regard to it, How could one, who did not wish to stereotype existing ceremonial, express such unambiguous endorsement of the whole Law? Hence Holtzmann supposes, that at least the last clause, and perhaps the whole verse, is an echo of Matt. xxiv. 34, 35; while Bassermann at most admits an original saying of Jesus on a different occasion, and with a different turn of thought. But we may counter with the question, Did Jesus habitually use measured words? Is it not among the saddest things to see how the strong pure words of Jesus have been made the excuse for unspiritual and pernicious errors? Yet Jesus undoubtedly reckoned the cost, and preferred sometimes to overshoot the mark rather than never reach it. Useless impotence, among what we count venial sins, was the sin which

[1] So Tholuck, Bleek, even Haupt, *Alttest. Citaten in den vier Ev.*

found Him merciless.—But a further difficulty is raised, to the effect that sayings similar to this verse occur with the Rabbis, who could not have borrowed from Jesus. But may not this give us the clue we need? Let us suppose that some such saying had already been current; and let us suppose that the would-be Antinomian among Jesus' disciples had commented, or thought in his heart, to this effect, *à propos* to the abrogation of tradition: "We are done then with jots and tittles; and a very good thing too. Precise moral scrupulosity is a great mistake. It never makes men good. Such minute moral observances can simply never be, while heaven and earth last. Good-bye to the little commandments!" It may be thought, that we are guilty of very bold construction, in putting so many of Jesus' expressions into the mouth, as may be said, of an imaginary heretic; but it is certain that Jesus' sayings exactly suit such a state of mind; and, if the Rabbinical currency of the expressions supports us in thinking that Jesus must have had special occasion to adopt them, we are supported in thinking that Jesus refers (in ver. 19) to the small details of moral duty, not to ceremony, by the remark of Haupt,[1] that to a Jew such ceremonial commandments as those connected with sacrifice would by no means appear to rank with the least commandments. In his papers on the Talmud,[2] Farrar even quotes Rashi, and a certain Rabbi Joseph Ben Rabba, as having laid down that "the great commandment of the law was the law about fringes." Jesus would think very differently; on the other hand, we know what a fatal thing impatience of small moralities

[1] As above.

[2] *Expositor* for 1877, p. 221.

appeared in His eyes.—It will be noticed that, in consistency with what we regard as the true meaning of "law and prophets," we have found a reason for the two clauses in ἕως. Morality is not impracticable. All its details must be realised. Till heaven and earth pass away,—a phrase which may be taken as broadly as is liked,—no moral duty shall ever be curtailed.

We pass now to ver. 19. Dr. Bruce[1] bases upon this verse his view of the passage under discussion. He regards it as a warning against violent and over-hasty measures of practical reform, and as a testimony to the superiority of positive over negative work in morality. It is thus an endorsement beforehand of Paul's career, and a condemnation of more extreme leaders. Curiously enough, Holtzmann and his followers, Bassermann and Feine, take a similar view of the verse; but they regard it as a Jewish-Christian insertion, aimed directly at Paul himself. And, indeed, the view which attributes such a warning to Jesus, or which supposes it aimed at unknown ultra-Pauline reformers, hangs in the air; nor is it consistent with exact exegesis. If one looks forward to reform, but desires to guard against premature and violent movements, one does not express oneself to the effect, that no jot or tittle of the existing constitution of things can possibly pass away. We may be asked, how could Jesus admit to the kingdom of God, even as lowest in rank, those who set aside moral precepts? The answer is, partly that His language is chosen for antithetic effect, partly that our Lord is thinking of the possibility of honest error. It is by no means inconceivable that a good man should rashly catch at the prospect of a general loosening of

[1] *Interpreter* for Dec. 1884.

obligations, supposing that he is doing what is merciful. This gives a somewhat new turn to the thought, but one not inconsistent with the previous verses.

And thus we are prepared for the transition to ver. 20. He who, touched with the spirit of revolt against Law, sets aside the least commandment, is least in the Kingdom, honest though his error may have been; he only who, like Jesus Himself, does and teaches the Law, is great in the Kingdom; but he who, at a period of moral and spiritual transition, falls below the standard of the age that is passing away, cannot so much as enter the Kingdom. We have got rid, be it observed, of a remark of Bleek's, of which much has been made by those who dissect this passage,—viz., that δέ would be expected here instead of γάρ. The particle refers back neither to ver. 17 nor to ver. 19, but to ver. 18. And there is distinct progress and continuity of thought throughout the passage, if we have rightly deciphered its meaning.

Some general remarks may now be added on the passage.

1. Jesus claims to realize the moral ideal of the Old Covenant. He claims to be what it required and signified; He claims to bring others within the circle of blessing. If we say that He claims *to fulfil the Law considered as a prediction of Himself*, we define His meaning as exactly as possible. By such a use of the word fulfil, both the conservative and the reforming elements of His life-work (if I may so speak) are implied. On this view Jesus merely asserts of Himself what He required of His followers,—that He not only "did" the commandments of God, but taught them and gave them

fresh currency. Only, it is implied in the nature of the case, it is involved in Jesus' language here, and it is confirmed by all His utterances elsewhere, that His observance of the Law is an event of unique importance, constituting an epoch in itself. Because He has been perfectly righteous, we are not therefore free from obligation to be righteous. Because of His righteousness, we are enabled to be righteous; we are made greater than kings and prophets. Because He has been righteous, we must be righteous. The Kingdom of God has come in Christ; hence we are daily to offer the prayer "Thy Kingdom come," and are commanded to "seek His Kingdom first." It has come in Christ; therefore it must come in all mankind.

2. In spite of Jesus' conscious affinity with the Old Testament, His view of the Law does not give a typological value to the ordinances of the Old Covenant. Such a view is common in the New Testament; it is given most fully, with power and deep insight, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. But Jesus does not speak of the Law as "a shadow of the good things to come," or justify its rites by showing their correspondence with religious needs, which His Gospel actually and in spirit satisfies.[1] The Law is to Him a revelation—the revelation—of righteousness. He finds religious value in it, because He finds permanent religious value in it,—because He finds in it a message, which His life-work does not supersede but re-emphasises. The same Law,

[1] There is, perhaps, the hint of a typology in the passages where Jesus speaks beforehand of His passion; Matt. xx. 28, xxvi. 28, and their parallels. When the type is interpreted in the light of fulfilment, there is no inconsistency in thus varying the point of view.

which He fulfils, is to be done and taught in His Kingdom.

3. We may refer for a moment to an interesting parallel in Paul's writings. Rom. iii. 21, 22 seems to refer to Christ's teaching in Matt. v. It does what is unusual in Paul; it traces continuity between the Law, the work of Christ, and righteousness on the part of the redeemed. The Law and the Prophets "witness" to that "righteousness of God which is through faith in Jesus Christ unto all them that believe." On the other hand, it is peculiarly Pauline that this righteousness should be "apart from the law," which (viii. 3) was "weak through the flesh." Connected with this are the further features, also lying beyond the circle of thoughts in Matt. v., that the righteousness of Christians is imputed to the guilty, and comes by faith, through Jesus' propitiatory death. With Paul, the three thoughts are closely bound together. In his view, the Law is the declaration of what the individual must do to attain salvation. On one side, it is the historical Covenant of the Exodus; on the other side, it is a statement of God's unchanging will. No man can keep it; it establishes the guilt of all (vers. 19, 20). Christ by His passion abolishes the Law, in atoning for sin, and introduces in its place a new dispensation, which imputes righteousness and admits to sonship, granting the Spirit of God. It may well be that this is the Pauline version or apprehension of what is taught in the Sermon on the Mount. It is a distinct version, but not a different teaching.

We have heard Paul speaking of a righteousness "apart from the law," and imputed. To complete our

parallel, we must add to Rom. iii. 21 the complementary passage Rom. viii. 4. Paul, with his fixed view of the Law as a dispensation opposite to that of grace, and of its abrogation by Christ's death, cannot speak of it as "fulfilled" by Christians. But, just as Christ looks to the "doing and teaching" of righteousness as a consequence of His righteous life, Paul recognises God's purpose, in exchanging the Law for a new dispensation by the sin-offering of Christ, to be "that the ordinance of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit."[1]

4. We must avoid several modernisms in interpreting our passage. We must not allow ourselves to say that Jesus "destroyed by fulfilling" the Law, when Jesus says He came "not to destroy but to fulfil." It is true, the thought from a different point of view is validly Christian; it is a nearly Pauline thought, perhaps exactly the thought of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But it perplexes us, in studying the words of Jesus. He speaks of the inner side of the Law, as a revelation of righteousness; we are thinking of its outer side, as a body of ceremonial types or as a statutory code. Again there are many who make the Sermon on the Mount the lawgiving of the kingdom.[2] Christ to them is a legislator, and they bluntly affirm that He did destroy the existing law. Some of them bring Matt. v. 17-20 under the suspicion[3] of Ebionism.

[1] For a parallel at the extreme end of New Testament theology remote from Paulinism, in the Epistle of James, see Appendix D, p. 278.

[2] As *Ecce Homo*.

[3] As *Supernatural Religion*, iii. 123; but more usually (Bassermann, etc.) at the expense of the Evangelist or his interpolator, rather than of Jesus.

But Christ is not a lawgiver; He has no "method and secret" to promulgate. Or rather, while it is true that the Sermon on the Mount is Christ's lawgiving, it is lawgiving addressed to His kingdom; and in that kingdom He is so much more than lawgiver, that all His words, even in seeming legislation, come to us on a different plane. But we must not, with the traditional Protestant exegesis, say that Christ is removing the dross that had gathered about the Moral Law, and republishing its true meaning. What He really does is, first, to reaffirm the Law; secondly, to give a new teaching. That is, He reaffirms the Law as it must be understood in the Kingdom, and as it can only there be understood; and He is entitled to call this a reaffirmation of the Law, because the kingdom of God is the natural development of the Divine dispensation administered through Law and prophets. The traditional exegesis supposes that Christ is speaking to His hearers of the Moral Law, or the Decalogue. Really He is speaking of the "law and prophets" as a whole; and, though He moves in a purely ethical realm, His hearers could not explain this by referring His teaching to the moral apart from the ceremonial law; that distinction had yet to arise for them.

The passage principally handled in this chapter is the only one in which Christ speaks explicitly of His relation to the Law. But much of His teaching, by word and by example, necessarily touches on the same topic, whether as a whole or in its details. We have seen what an idealised view of the Law Jesus held and taught; we must ask how He comported Himself towards the actual law in outward life. He valued the

Law as God's revelation; we must ask how He judged of the oral tradition of the scribes. He regarded the Law as essentially ethical; we must ask how His teaching raised the details of duty to corresponding purity. He was apparently indifferent to ceremonial; none the less, occasion sometimes led Him to speak of ceremonies and their value; we must gather what His teaching was. His position seemed to make Him indifferent to institutions; yet He was loyal to Israel's past; we must ask how He comported Himself towards practical problems of statesmanship. Did He sanction the existing order? Did He wish it reformed? Did He let it stand for a time, till a better order should grow up? Similarly, Jesus advanced great personal claims, but did not act as the inventor or first founder of religions; how or how far did He compare the new with the old? These questions will be taken up, and if possible answered, in successive chapters.

CHAPTER III.

CHRIST'S CRITICISM OF THE PHARISEES.

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THE Jewish world was much divided into parties when our Lord and His great forerunner entered on their work. The Essenes, with whom half-educated scepticism used to connect John, or Jesus, or both, were a recluse sect—a religious order under the old covenant —an anomaly, who died away, leaving no results, unless in Ebionism,[1] and perhaps in monasticism. The Sadducees were wealthy and cultured temporisers. Degenerate descendants of the Maccabees, they had lost the spirit of their race, and, by a natural consequence, were rapidly losing the spirit of their religion. It existed in them only as a survival, or as a tradition, without capacity of development; they had no stake in the future, and perished in the storm which overwhelmed their unhappy country. The Zealots[2] were the men of prophecy, and still more of the apocalyptic and pseudepigraphic books. We know how closely and painfully Jesus' Messianic claims touched on the hopes of the Zealots. At least one of their party was admitted to the inner circle of the disciples. But, with most of the party, a non-military Messiahship could

[1] See below, Appendix D, p. 289.

[2] According to Edersheim, in his somewhat thin and vague Warburton Lecture.

only lead to fierce and bitter disappointment. Every Jewish provincial was a potential Zealot, and looked, as the Zealots did, for a political millenarian catastrophe instead of a spiritual salvation. Hence, on the whole, the result of Jesus' dealing with the people at large was, on both sides, bitter disappointment. Zealotism went its own way, and burnt itself out in the horrors of the siege, and of Bar Cochba's rebellion. The Pharisees were in a different position. They were the men of the Law. Their scheme for securing its observance, along with the observance of oral tradition, offered the nation the prospect of political deliverance and the hope of a millennium. By excluding every possible transgression, they hoped to secure, in the Levitical sense, a perfectly holy nation; that done, they looked for an immediate act of God's omnipotence to terminate Israel's sorrows and bring in the glory of the latter day. Thus, though the Pharisees did not use political means, they were entangled in obsolete ideas, and looked for a political deliverance as their great end. They were, therefore, certain to run counter to Jesus, whose ideas were ethical, not political. The very mission which Jesus claimed, to fulfil the Law and the Prophets, was an insult to the Law in the eyes of the legal party. The Law did not need, in their opinion, any such individual observance as that of Jesus, in order to come to religious currency and efficacy; their casuistic machinery would secure the desired result. The nation chose between Jesus and the Pharisees, —between Jesus and the Talmud. Pharisaism alone among the rivals of Christ had any vitality; the Sadducees supported the Pharisee policy against Jesus only when things were far developed. Afterwards

its rivals being dead, and the spiritual life of the people thrust out in the persons of the Christians, Pharisaism gathered together the wounded orphan children of the land, and dry-nursed them on traditions. The loss of the temple only gave a fresh impetus to legalism. It is marvellous that Judaism should have survived; but its survival is life-in-death rather than life.

We must remember that, until the advent of Jesus, and until His creation of a new world, the Pharisees represented, on the whole, the more religious and earnest elements in the nation. Paul, even when a Christian, could say, "I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees" (Acts xxiii. 6). They taught the Resurrection of the dead, and Jesus taught it; they taught the observance of the Law, and Jesus revered it; they acknowledged the prophets' authority, and Jesus appealed to the prophets. Hence He taught, even at the last, while expressing Himself most decidedly against them, that "the scribes and Pharisees sat on Moses' seat" (Matt. xxiii. 2). But their interest was externalism, —His was spirituality; the Baptist, Jesus' forerunner, had already denounced them; and no compromise between such opposite tendencies was possible.

The first sign of the life-long conflict was Jesus' rejection of Pharisee tradition. His attitude is unquestionably significant, in more ways than one. He drew a deep trench between the Law and its customary developments. Respecting the first as Divine, He denied that the second had any binding force; often He rejected them as pernicious.

At the same time, it was impossible that Jesus should set Himself against all observance of tradition. For

tradition was the body of social and religious custom observed by the majority of His nation; and, unless He was to anticipate the *outré* reforming spirit of Quakerism, He must for the most part acquiesce in what was expected of Him. And, assuredly, He followed every custom that was harmless. Thus, for example, the sequence of events at the Last Supper is explained by a reference to the form which tradition had impressed upon the Paschal rite. But, religious as it was, tradition, like the Law, had extended to the whole of life, and had given a religious value to one of alternative courses of action in things indifferent. Hence, without systematically attacking or rejecting it, Jesus might protest against its claims, on occasion of its abuses or extravagances being manifested. And that is the course which we find that He followed.

1. Christ set an example, in several respects, of opposition to tradition. He eat with publicans and sinners (Matt. ix. 11 and parallels; Luke xv. 2), excusing Himself with tender humour, when blamed by the Pharisees. He was a physician of souls, He said; He must go where He could find His patients; His critics, in their self-conscious goodness, were healthy people who had no need of Him. He persisted in working cures on the Sabbath[1] (Luke iv. 33, vi. 6, xiii. 11, xiv. 1; and some parallels; John v. 8, 9; ix. 7, 14), although this caused the greatest scandal to the friends of tradition. Where a positive moral duty came in, Jesus' regard for peace, and His consideration for others, gave way to a higher claim.

2. Encouraged by Jesus' example, His disciples

[1] Christ's attitude towards the Sabbath is discussed in the next chapter.

themselves disregarded the laws of tradition on some occasions. This did not fail to call forth the anger or the indignant surprise of the Pharisees and their followers. The disciples had omitted to fast (Matt. ix. 14, and parallels); they were challenged for this by men stirred up by Jesus' enemies, or jealous for the honour of the Baptist; and Jesus defended them.[1] Walking through the cornfields on a Sabbath, the disciples (xii. 1, and parallels) plucked and eat the growing corn. For this the Pharisees attacked Jesus. "To reap and to thresh on the Sabbath were, of course, forbidden by one of the *abhôth*, or primary rules; but the Rabbis had decided that to pluck corn was to be construed as reaping, and to rub it as threshing; even to walk on grass was forbidden, because that, too, was a species of threshing; and not so much as a fruit must be plucked from a tree. All these latter acts were violations of the *toldôth*, or 'derivative rules.'"[2] Again, they "transgressed the tradition of the elders" (xv. 2, and Mark vii. 2) by eating[3] with unwashen hands, and were accused in terms of the crime of violating tradition. In each case, Jesus defended the disciples. Whether their action were or were not seemly, it was not sinful; and, just as, in later history, Paul had to oppose the imposition on the Gentiles of Jewish law, while it was treated as needful to salvation, so here Jesus must resist the imposition of Jewish tradition, when it is treated as part of God's saving will. On the first occasion, He denied that His

[1] See below, ch. vi., p. 121.

[2] Farrar, *Life of Christ*, p. 207, popular edition.

[3] Luke xi. 38, as it stands, represents Jesus as doing the same thing.

disciples were breaking the Sabbath,[1] implicitly denying that the traditional safeguards of the Sabbath deserved respect. On the second occasion, when the only charge was one of breaking traditional ethic, He replied by a tremendous attack upon the system of tradition. This was the first time, apparently, in which Jesus had spoken in denunciation of tradition, though He had repeatedly acted in its defiance. He was so far roused as to enunciate the principle, which lay at the heart of His life and teaching, and which put a gulf between Himself and the Pharisees,—"Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man; but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth[2] the man."

3. Jesus' attack on tradition was not yet complete. His mission on earth was not one of controversy, but of life and goodness. Even the necessary negations of His life He allowed to come incidentally, as we have seen, and chiefly by way of example. But the guilt of the Pharisees forced on Him the duty of controversy. Theirs was not the blindness of mere ignorance, but a wilful blindness, which, when enlightened, hated His light. On neither side was the difference viewed as speculative. The Pharisees were enemies, spies, sneering critics, murderers, of Christ and His following. And Christ, in a passage which stands in Luke (xi. 37-52) in the middle of the Great Insertion, but which is placed in Matthew (xxiii.) as His last summing-up against H s life-long enemies, recites the whole guilt of the Pharisees, practical and doctrinal, letting it culminate in this,—"Ye shut the kingdom of heaven

[1] Below, ch. iv.
[2] Below, ch. vi.

against men; for ye enter not in yourselves, neither suffer ye them that are entering in to enter" (ver. 13).

Such are the conditions under which Christ disavowed unwritten tradition. Let us now examine the grounds He gives for doing so.

1. The repudiation of tradition might have many shades of meaning. As between two schools, it might be a small question. As a concession to human languor, tradition might be rejected by a soft philanthropy. But Jesus' rejection of it is profoundly significant. It is due, not only formally, to His reverence for God's sole revelation, but materially, to His unconquerable aversion to the spirit of externalism embodied in tradition. Christ's conduct points back to a rudimentary difference between Jesus and His rivals. The two views of the Law, which they represent, are at opposite poles. The Pharisees assert, Jesus denies, that it is possible by external maxims to secure goodness of heart and life. Merely to deny this would not involve Christian truth, as against every erroneous system; but, as against Pharisaism, which was a dead orthodoxy, it involved the whole of Christianity. Christ charged Pharisee tradition with externalism,[1]—that is, with shallowness and worldliness. "All their works," He says (Matt. xxiii. 5), "they do to be seen of men." And, in His address to His disciples, He lays down the general principle of life in the words (vi. 1), "Take heed that ye do not your righteousness before men, to be seen of them; else ye have no reward with your Father which is in heaven." The introduction to each of Christ's rules of conduct is "be not as the hypocrites" or "actors"[2]

[1] It is in this form that Jesus' aversion to mere legalism expresses itself.

[2] *Ecce Homo*, ch. xi.

(vi. 2, 5, 16). The last of the woes which Christ pronounces, declares that the "hypocrites" cleanse "the outside," and "outwardly appear righteous unto men," while inwardly they are "full from extortion and excess, full of hypocrisy and iniquity" (xxiii. 25-28). We cannot measure how far we are indebted to Christ for the perception, that ostentation is fatal to the life of the spirit. His own principle, which governs all the special maxims that He gives—and they are few—is, "Out of the heart come forth . . . the things which defile the man" (xv. 19); "Cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter, that the outside may become clean also" (xxiii. 26).

2. But the offence of the Pharisee casuistry could not stop short at its externalism. External it must be; it was doomed to fail of reaching the heart of any sin or duty. But the fate of casuistry drives it yet further, to a ridiculous and tedious distinction between things which are equally indifferent, and to a shameful confounding of things which are diverse. A breach of etiquette becomes a sin; a sin becomes a social lapse; it becomes moral to perform one trifle, immoral and wicked to perform as trifling an action. Nay, since casuistry moves among external things, and tries to give an explicit verbal rule for each duty, it ends by attaching more value to the outward correctness, which it can test, than to that inward purity, which it professes to serve, but which cannot be verified by its coarse method. This error, too, roused Jesus to bitter scorn. He could not condemn the scribes' punctilious scrupulosity, but it wearied Him; the perpetual "Is it lawful?" which filled the life of a Pharisee sage was foreign to His spirit of insight, and calmness, and

heavenly holiness; He hated an exaggeration of trifles which cast the realities of the moral life into the shade. "Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, judgment and mercy and faith; but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone" (Matt. xxiii. 23). "Ye blind guides, which strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel" (ver. 24).

3. Nor was this the worst of the Pharisee casuistry. It is impossible to write an encyclopædia of conduct. On one hand, facts are too nice, too delicate, too varying, to be brought under even the most elaborate doctrinaire scheme; on the other hand, the moral doubts of daily life teach us that there is not always a single principle, which claims to regulate each action, but that many actions may be referred to different heads, and, according as they are referred to one or other, judged lawful or unlawful. In other words, moral dilemmas are often really moral, not mere evasions of a bad conscience. To our bewilderment there seems to be a conflict of duties, all imperiously commanding us to follow them, but in different directions. From such difficult and exceptional cases it follows that every action may be a duty, or, at least, may be permissible, under certain circumstances; that every action under certain circumstances may prove to be wrong. The bad man's excuse is, that he thought his the exceptional position, in which his deed might be pardoned; he alleges that he meant well. But, what a dishonest conscience does for the individual, systematic casuistry in the end does for the community. It becomes a degrading force. The only safeguard of

virtue is the healthy prompting of a nature accustomed to act rightly, and sincerely desirous of doing so. Ethical rules, at the best, are somewhat vague generalities; they can be no more than approximations. When one ceases to ask, "What should I do?" and begins to ask, "How far may I lawfully go?" one has fallen. Of course casuistry does not mean to serve the devil; but its temptation is native, and the inborn sin is irresistible. Moral truth is to be learned by practical intuition, not by cold calculation. Even the Jesuit casuistry, which Pascal scourged, may not have originated in a desire to pervert morality. The wish to furnish an encyclopædia for the confessional constituted a standing moral danger. It involved the asking of impossible questions, and the choosing of answers as lenient as might be, in order to keep worldly men on terms with the Church. But, when such temptations came in the way of unscrupulous partisans like the Jesuits, then, with help from the spiritual deadness of a sacramentarian view of Christian life, there resulted the incredible degeneracy of which all the world heard, when stress was laid on the possible excuses for worldly sin, and on the possible evasions even of worldly honour, till the moral sense was altogether trifled away. It appears probable that the Pharisees, too, had fallen to the depth of a falsity, which ceases to be ashamed. Indeed, when one disregards the conditions of conduct which lie in personality,—when one isolates an action alike from motive and from circumstances, and classifies actions like material things,—when some of these "things" are artificially depreciated, others conventionally valuable, can we wonder if there is a tendency to forget what the whole

inquiry is based on? The mineralogy of conduct, in its eagerness over conspicuous resemblances, may easily forget the distinction of right and wrong. It is so easy to be ceremonially pure—and a swindler; it is so difficult to be inwardly stainless, when harassed by doubts or howled down by public opinion. If the Pharisee distinctions in regard to oaths (Matt. xxiii. 16-20) were meant to make some oaths binding, and others void, with a view to the evasion of oaths, one ceases to wonder that Jesus should have said to such a generation, "Swear not at all"[1] (Matt. v. 34). Oaths, indeed, spring in all cases "from evil;" every man's word ought to be as good as his bond; but it is an additional degradation when the solemn forms of asseveration are tampered with, and when—either because of an equal measure of low cunning, or because his piety suggests fantastic scruples to the Jew—the God-enlightened Pharisee sinks to the level of the Arab or the Celt, who breaks every oath except one.

In another instance, there is no doubt that Jesus found sheer immorality in the Pharisee system. No casuistical principle more readily offers itself than the assumption, that duty to God outweighs duty to men. The Pharisees, accordingly (Matt. xv. 3, *sq.*), assumed, that the duty to support one's parents was annulled by declaring the dedication to God of the means that would have sufficed for household piety. This impudent evasion of one of the ten commandments Jesus stigmatised as "hypocrisy," and as "teaching the precepts of men." To ignore the need of being just before one can be generous was bad enough. But worse might lie underneath. Dedication

[1] See below, ch. v.

to God might be only a pretext, not an honest resolve. The bizarre spirituality, which soars above the laws of common goodness, tends towards infinite degradation; and the son who dishonoured his parents might not lack a second pretext, or scruple to rob God.[1]

Such, then, were the reasons which Jesus alleged against Pharisee tradition, and because of which He rejected it as a human fabrication. But His criticism of the Pharisees did not end here. Resting on principles, it reached to every part of their religious teaching. He did not quarrel more with their traditions, or with their habits, than with their view of the Law.

If "the scribes and the Pharisees sat on Moses' seat" (Matt. xxiii. 1), it was natural that one greater than Moses should express His opinion of these modern lawyers. Accordingly, in the classical passage (Matt. v. 17, *sq.*), Jesus struck the keynote of His teaching in the words, "Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven;" *i.e.*, so far from introducing an easier mode of life than that which the lawyers taught, and which he abolished,—so far from giving indulgence to the flesh, as might have seemed probable,—Jesus introduced a yet severer purity. On one hand, there is the righteousness of the Kingdom; on the other hand, contrasted with it, there is the righteousness of scribes and Pharisees, which, since these men, however

[1] According to the article "Corban" in Smith's *Bible Dictionary* the maxim in question protected mere profane vows, "not to support one's father," etc., as sacredly as the Corban. I have not found this view in the commentaries.

unworthily, represent Moses, is at the same time, I will not say the righteousness of the Old Covenant, but is at least the standard righteousness of all who remain outside the Kingdom.

The occasion of these words is significant. Jesus, as we learn from Luke (vi. 12, *sq.*; compare Mark iii. 13), had just chosen the twelve; the Sermon on the Mount, so called after Matthew, is, in point of fact, the document or charter of the kingdom of God at its foundation as a distinct society. Jesus had not been sent on a random mission. He worked within the Church (I can use no other word) which God had already founded; He lived among those who had been chosen to a Divine education; and He scrupulously confined His labours to that politically conditioned sphere, though His own ministry was to put it out of date. He sought "the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But the leaders of that people were evil shepherds. In them,—guardians of orthodoxy, expounders of Moses,—He ought naturally to have found His allies and disciples. There would have been no need to found the Christian Church by abrupt separation from the Jewish Church, if the authorities of the latter had subjected themselves in faith to the gentle teaching of Jesus. But both the successors of Aaron and the successors of Ezra refused Him. The aim of that Judean ministry, which John alone records, seems to have been an appeal by Jesus to the nation as a nation. The continuance of baptism, the prolongation of the Forerunner's call to repentance, the beginning at Jerusalem, the cleansing of the temple (John i.-iii.), all combine to bear this witness. But the hatred

of the Pharisees (Matt. iv. 12; John iv. 1)—if we may dogmatise on a much disputed point of Gospel harmony—drove Jesus from the south to the north. In other words, the rulers of the nation had already rejected Him, as they had rejected John the Baptist (Matt. xvii. 12). And, when their emissaries and spies dogged Him to the synagogues of Galilee, and stirred up the simple villagers to hostility, and carping misconstruction, He felt that the time had come to strike a decisive blow; and He accordingly chose the twelve, as the true leaders of the tribes, and as trustees of the fulfilment of the promises. Thus Christ declared Himself creator of a new Israel. Already as a teacher possessing disciples, He now gave a fixed and statutory form to discipleship in the case of twelve chosen men. Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees was not, it is true, equivalent to the Divine rejection of Israel, any more than the Pharisees' rejection of Jesus in the Judean ministry secured the external failure of Jesus' Galilean labours; yet the first event in each case was the significant prefigurement of the later. That election, by which Jesus implied His despair of the orthodox Jews, was a sufficient proof that His Gospel was independent of the political or social conditions of His nation. Thus it was a distinct prefigurement of the rise of a Church separate from the Jewish, and indifferent to Judaism; while, if Israel was to reject Him, the rise of such a Church meant Israel's rejection by God, and the turning of God's messengers to other lands.

If these were the circumstances which conditioned Jesus' choice of the apostles, and the delivery of His first great address to them, we can understand

the antithetic emphasis with which Jesus separates Himself and His disciples from Pharisaism. The sermon was not only a royal statute and charter, among the documents of the Kingdom; it was a declaration of war against the false and cruel "sons of the kingdom" (Matt. viii. 12), who, once called to form the community, in which the kingdom of God should become a realised fact and a power over the world, had long ago fallen short of their calling, and now had become the Kingdom's enemies. Again, the Pharisees were as near Jesus in the letter as they were far from Him in spirit; for this reason it was necessary explicitly to distinguish His law-giving from theirs. Jesus found their religion outward; He declares their morality to be forced and legal. The Pharisee saint was a just man, a hard-hearted man of business, who stuck to his rights. He loved his neighbour and hated his enemy. He was correct in outward deportment; he did not kill, or commit adultery, or break a solemn oath. He represented the dead letter of the Old Covenant. So, in speaking to men who knew the Law as it showed through Pharisee spectacles, Jesus did not stop to sift the pure gold of God from the dross of human error. "Ye have[1] heard," He says, — viz., from them[2] who sit on Moses' seat,—"that it was said to them of old time," so and so; "but I say unto you," otherwise, thus. He does not stop to ask whether the declarations made to them of old were faithfully reproduced by the people's teachers; some-

[1] Matt. v. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43.

[2] "In the Synagogues," Weiss, *Matthäusev;* Lechler, *Stud u. Krit.* 1854.

times He represents those teachers as quoting the Decalogue or other words of Scripture; once they are represented as adding to a scripture ("Thou shalt love thy neighbour") a clause ("Thou shalt hate thine enemy") which can scarcely be construed as fairly reproducing the Old Testament spirit. No matter; the people's recognised teachers taught them so; whether they vulgarised the spirit of the Law or adulterated its letter, made little difference; Jesus had something new to teach. But, by criticising the lawyers and not the Law, our Lord preserves that reverent and religious attitude towards the Old Covenant, which we recognised in His treatment of "the law and the prophets." To criticise the Old Covenant, or even in a doctrinaire manner to develop it more perfectly, would need an attitude towards the Law, and a temper of mind, different from those of God's revealer. Jesus dwelt at home in the Old Testament; He left it to His Church to compare reflectively the stages of revelation. But no spiritual barrier kept Him from criticising the sacred currency, when it came to Him from the hands of Pharisees, redolent of contact with them. To do that was both a practical necessity and a part of His mission as the Revealer. Again, He does not stop to put in, "But I say unto you that so it was said;" this had been no better for Him than to say, "But so it was said." He is no reproducer; He is a creator, even while He uses the greatest reverence towards Law and Prophets. Although in one sense, and in the best sense of the phrase, a conservative reformer, He is much more,—"teaching as one having authority" (Matt. vii. 29), speaking from the fountain of truth in His own

heart. He is criticising the Pharisee view of the Law, it is true; but He is doing more than set up a better view; He is founding and enlightening the kingdom of God. The true light does not merely revive the half lights of earlier days; it shines as "the light of the world," it serves as "the light of life."

A passage is still to be mentioned in which Jesus speaks neither in particular of the Pharisees' view of the Law, nor of their traditions, but rather of their whole spirit and mode of life. It is a gratifying sign of real progress that Matt. xi. 28, *sq.*, a passage which used to be mentioned only to be ruled out as interpolated by a Johannine author, is now adduced by writers of the critical school, as conveying the essential impression of Jesus' person, as well as the essence of His teaching (Holtzmann, who calls it "the kernel of the Gospel"). By general agreement, there is a reference to the yoke of the Rabbinical schools, a yoke which none "was able to bear." Jesus contrasts with it His yoke and burden, thus sentencing Pharisaism to death, and promising relief, not by deliverance from law, but by the power of His personality ("learn of me"). Such deliverance is His loving gift to the weary and sad, who toil but never are at an end of their toil. Though aimed directly at the Pharisees, the passage, from one point of view, forms an important counterpart to Matt. v. 17, in its teaching on the Law.

Another passage still to be mentioned is, on the other side, the counterpart to the teaching regarding the Pharisees of Matt. xi. 28. But there seems to be a difficulty in it. I refer to Matt. xxiii. 2. If

Christ not only recognised the Pharisees as Moses' representatives, but bade the people obey them, is it not inconceivable that He should have purposed to emancipate men from tradition, or have taken up the position of the founder of a religion? We must not, however, take these words too literally. The very discourse which follows shows, that Jesus took abundant exception to Pharisee teaching as well as to Pharisee example (vers. 16, 18). If not modified in tradition, the words are a rhetorical antithesis. The good elements in the Pharisees' teaching threw into more ominous prominence the sins of their lives.

We have seen, then, that our Lord, while He viewed the Law and Prophets as the revelation of God, found current a prosaic and unethical interpretation of them, which was at the opposite pole from His own, and with which He held no parley. In criticising it He, not formally, but virtually, passed criticism on the limits of Old Testament revelation, and indicated their removal. But the Pharisee reading of the Law was supplemented by a tradition, which sought to make any fulfilment by the Christ superfluous, which almost withdrew the Law from the religious sphere, and which was clogged with pedantry and tainted with license. This addition to the Law Jesus condemned in terms and set aside in practice; a fact, which, for us, has become matter of course, but which had a main part in hurrying inevitably on the tragedy of His passion.

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S PERSONAL OBSERVANCE OF THE WRITTEN LAW.

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IN our course of study we have now to face the question, How did Christ comport Himself in practice towards the Jewish Law? And we shall try to answer the question, by showing that Jesus regarded Himself as keeping the Law, even in its ceremonial part. Christ no doubt kept the moral Law; but His sinlessness cannot be proved by an induction of facts; He was not even brought to trial on the charge of breaking the statute law of the Old Covenant; and, as regards the religious or covenant side of the Law, Jesus claimed Messiahship in a sense which implied that His life was essentially too great for measurement by the Old Covenant.

We must keep this in mind throughout in considering the question, whether Christ's conduct squares with the Law. We never, indeed, find Him putting in force Messianic immunities or indulgences; but His Messianic functions are duties not to be trammelled. The heavenly Healer does not even set aside the Law by touching the polluted in order to restore them. How could the Law forbid, or even contemplate, such a case as that?

Our practical inquiry, therefore, is, whether Christ kept the ceremonial Law. We shall try to prove that

He did, by showing that He meant to keep the Law. And we shall need all our powers, for, perhaps, a majority of those scholars, who are free from dogmatic prejudice, hold that He deliberately broke the Sabbath. On this question our inquiry will hinge.—Whether we admit or deny the exhaustive accuracy of describing the Sabbath as a ceremony, those Christians who hold that Christ broke it, hold that it was a ceremony, and that our Lord regarded it as such.

1. In opening the discussion of Christ's behaviour in regard to ceremonies, I may refer first to two of our Lord's sayings, which throw light on the general principles of His conduct.

The palmary passage Matt. v. 17 tells us that our Lord came "not to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfil." It is true, we have found reason to conclude that, in these words, our Lord is thinking of the ethical side of the Law; but the very generality of the expression involves a disclaimer of opposition to the existing Law, and gives a broad pledge of obedience.

The other passage referred to is specially calculated to make good any lack of distinctness in the first. It occurs in Matthew's report of our Lord's baptism. Mysterious though the grounds of that transaction are, and uncertain as is the meaning of the words in which our Lord overrules the Baptist's hesitation, the words themselves are plain enough (Matt. iii. 15), "Thus it becometh us to fulfil all pious observance" (compare vi. 1). Even if the letter were less distinct, the spirit of the transaction points out Christ as a keeper of the religious ordinances of His day. Is it not then evident, that Christ designed, at least, to keep the Law?

2. Next, it may be noticed that Christ's habits of life were not ascetic or sectarian, but were those of the people. An Essene or a Nazirite might vary the habits of his nation with popular approval, or at least without check; Christ could not do so. According to John's Gospel, He always endeavoured, while it was possible, to attend the Passover. The Synoptists (Matt. xxvi. 17; Mark xiv. 12) represent the disciples as taking for granted that Christ will keep the last Passover. In His teaching,[1] He repeatedly acknowledged the currency of parts of the Law of ordinances.

3. If details fail us, a further consideration may reconcile us to their absence. Christ was exposed all His life to the criticism of Pharisees,—*i.e.*, of fanatics, who were zealous for the Law, especially for its most trivial jots and external tittles. These men form for us the most efficient of all possible courts of inquiry. If they found nothing against Him in the matter of their Law,—bitterly as they hated Him, stung as they were to the quick by His rejection of their tradition,—there can have been no point in which His conduct differed from what the Law required. At His trial, they did their best; "Many bare false witness against Him, and their witness agreed not together" (Mark xiv. 56). If they could have convicted Him of Sabbath-breaking, or of any ritual transgression, they would gladly have done so; but they were helpless. We hear, indeed, of an attack upon His teaching; "There stood up certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I

[1] Below, ch. vi.

will build another made without hands" (vers. 57, 58). In this evidence, possibly, we meet with a reminiscence of John ii. 19; beyond a doubt it was based on some saying of our Lord regarding changes which His death should bring about. But this charge, too, came to nothing. He had not broken with the Law. He was indeed found guilty,—but not of traversing the Jewish Law, only of claiming what was incredible and hateful to Pharisees. The claim itself condemned Him.

4. More will need to be said in regard to Jesus' treatment of the Sabbath. It may be argued that, in regard to it, the Pharisees were silenced but not convinced. Although, so far as we hear, they were too much ashamed of the charge to use it at His trial, although, at any rate, they did not use it with success, it may be alleged that the one justifiable charge against Jesus, from a Pharisee or legalist point of view, was that He broke the Sabbath. Many theologians think that He did so. A review of the facts, about which the question arises, will show us its importance in the history of our Lord's ministry.

The Synoptic Gospels record five cases in which Jesus broke the traditional rest[1] of the Sabbath. Of these cases Matthew records two; Mark, repeating these, adds another; and Luke records all five. Four of them were cases of cure wrought in synagogues. Our Lord's ministry in Galilee began (Mark i. 21; Luke iv. 31) with the cure of a demoniac in the synagogue at Capernaum. As yet, His conduct was not unfavourably criticised; astonishment, we may suppose,

[1] Above, ch. iii., pp. 42, 43.

swallowed up every other feeling. Still, He must have known that He was offending the Pharisees; and soon there was a singular manifestation of the fact that the people's religious sympathy lagged equally behind Him. "At even, when the sun did set,"—*i.e.*, when Sabbath was over,—they brought out their sick to get them cured. While they were willing to receive blessings from our Lord, they had not confidence enough in Him to believe that what He did on Sabbath, it could be no sin to do on the Sabbath. In two of the other cases of cure, it is recorded that our Lord felt Himself watched by Pharisees, and that He defended His conduct; in the remaining case of Sabbath cure (Luke xiii. 11) He wrought His miracle without apology; the ruler of the synagogue, doubtless with a deep consciousness of moderation, blamed the multitude for accepting or occasioning deeds of mercy on the holy day; and Jesus stigmatised him as a hypocrite for raising such objections in the name of religion.

The fifth case in which Jesus disputed with the Pharisees concerning the Sabbath arose out of the disciples' conduct in plucking ears of corn on that day (Matt. xii. 1; Mark ii. 23; Luke vi. 1). It was remarkable for the arguments used by our Lord, and for the claim He put forth.

When we turn from the Synoptic Gospels to the fourth Gospel, with its different atmosphere and scenery, and with its fresh stock of reminiscences, we find no change in regard to the Sabbath. Jesus in Jerusalem is as much a scandal to the Pharisees, and an offence to their Sabbatarianism, as Jesus in Galilee. On His first return to the capital after the close of the Judean ministry, Jesus (v. 9) wrought a miracle on the

Sabbath. He was quickly taken to task for doing so; but, with His reply, the conversation as recorded diverges from the interesting charge of Sabbath-breaking to the graver and still more exciting charge of blasphemy. On His return, however, a second time, Jesus, we are told, referred to this miracle and defended His conduct. Not content with this, He (ix. 1) wrought another cure on a Sabbath, the cure of a man born blind. This resulted in the conversion of the man cured, and drove the Pharisees to vehement anger. But no further discussion on the subject is on record.

We now proceed to consider our Lord's apologies, and to prove from them that He kept the Sabbath. But our right to argue thus may be challenged. We have already, it may be said, omitted the deeper religious questions as to the meaning of Christ's obedience, in order to confine ourselves in this chapter to an induction of facts. But would the fact that Christ meant to keep the Sabbath prove, as a fact, that He did keep it? Can we fairly take such things for granted? The objection is plausible. But I would ask the objector to reflect what the question to be settled is. It is not, did Christ perform such and such actions? It is this, were certain actions, admitted to have been done by Christ, consistent with the Sabbath law, or inconsistent with it? Certainly three-fourths of the answer to such a question are contained in the proof, that Christ meant to keep the Sabbath. Of course, if our critics appeal from the opinion of Christ to the opinion of the legalists, we give up the contest. If, however, they appeal to what the legalists could prove against Christ, we may still claim the verdict.

The simplest of our Lord's defences is found in an

apology for healing on the Sabbath (Luke vi. 9 and parallels xiv. 3), that "it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." Along with this we may take the quotation Matt. xii. 7, "I desire mercy, and not sacrifice;" and we may also compare our Lord's summaries of the Law (vii. 12, xxii. 36-40). It was a leading principle of Christ's teaching, that charity is piety. But let us note the exact words of the defence we are studying. What does it affirm? "It is lawful" to do good on the Sabbath; the rest of Sabbath allows exceptions in the way of benevolent deeds. The very structure of our language reminds us that such a plea does not assert change of law, but implies its continuance. Christ, then, is arguing that He has not broken the Sabbath.

As the second of our Lord's apologies, we may adduce a group of passages, all of which defend miracles wrought in mercy on the Sabbath, Luke xiii. 15, xiv. 5; John vii. 22, 23. These refer to precedents, set by the Law itself, or by Jesus' Pharisee censors themselves, which suggest that, out of kindness, one may vary the rest of Sabbath. These passages then continue to vindicate Christ's conduct as legal. At least, they can bear that interpretation; even if they admit of being explained as hinting at the abrogation of Sabbath, they do not require us to explain them in that sense.

In passing now to study the classical passage Matt. xii. 1; Mark ii. 23; Luke vi. 1, we enter on a tedious and difficult investigation. These parallels record a discussion, not over a Sabbath cure, but over the disciples' plucking corn on Sabbath,—*i.e.*, over a breach of tradition. It is our Lord's mode of answering the objections raised, which takes the matter out of the

category of His criticisms of the Pharisees, and makes it illustrative of His attitude towards the Law. It is certainly singular that His highest claims should be advanced, not in vindication of deeds of mercy, but in defence of conduct, which, though harmless, had no moral motive. Perhaps we might explain this by saying, that in the absence of moral *raison d'être* our Lord felt it necessary to raise the discussion of the disciples' conduct above the exegesis of the fourth commandment, and on that account dignified the occasion by announcing His own claims. Still, one cannot feel certain that the mere repudiation of tradition (as in Matt. xv. 3) would have been either inconvenient or insufficient. Again, that part of Christ's defence which is common to all three Gospels,—the story of David at Nob,—while in many points it creates a very exact parallel to the circumstances of our Lord and His disciples, seems to fail at a crucial point. David was in need; the disciples were not. And the other defences recorded by Matthew,—the example of the priests, and the quotation from Hosea,—though in their case the difficulty may be got over, seem scarcely more apt. The priests had a sacred duty to perform—the disciples had not; and what is the meaning of talking about mercy?

(1) In these circumstances, Dr. Weiss's criticism comes to our rescue. He regards the earliest Gospel, from which is derived the larger part of the first three Gospels, as having been a Hebrew Gospel by Matthew —the λόγια of Papias—containing our Lord's discourses, along with a certain amount of historical matter. This He calls the "Apostolic Source." A Greek translation of this was used by Mark, who altered

it freely in accordance with the traditions which he had learned from Peter. Both the Apostolic Source (in Greek) and Mark's Gospel were used by the author of our Matthew; they were his chief though by no means his only sources. Luke wrote later, without knowledge of this predecessor, using the same principal sources, and supplementing them in a similar way.

In the present instance, Weiss regards Matt. xii. 3-8 as being substantially reproduced from the "Apostolic Source," although Luke, perhaps under the influence of Mark, curtailed the passage. He thinks, however, that the present context did not originally belong to the passage, but is due to Mark, who wove a part of the passage into the record, which he had learned from Peter, of a controversy with the Pharisees about the disciples' conduct in plucking ears of corn on Sabbath. That controversy may have been settled, he thinks, by our Lord's remark (Mark ii. 27), "The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath,"—*i.e.*, the Sabbath was instituted for man's good, and must not be exaggerated so as to require his suffering or harm; that which is the end of the Law may be a reason for setting it aside. The interpretation of the passage from the "Apostolic Source" runs equally smoothly. It was properly introduced by the record of a challenge addressed to the twelve for curing on the Sabbath. David's action was excused by need; the disciples' miracles were excused by the need of the sick. The priests "profaned the Sabbath" by their temple duties, without guilt; the disciples broke the Sabbath in the furtherance of a still holier mission, and under the sanction of a still more august presence. The Pharisees had raised a doubt in the interests of ceremonialism;

but God preferred mercy, and the disciples' acts had been deeds of mercy. On this interpretation, the passage in the "Apostolic Source" admitted at least of being taken as maintaining the Sabbath, while the Petrine sentence, Mark ii. 27 favoured that view.[1] The concluding sentence, practically identical in the three Gospels, proves that Christ maintained the Sabbath. Weiss takes it without introduction, as in Luke, "The Son of man is Lord of the Sabbath,"—*i.e.*, "The Head of the Kingdom of God is head of its preparatory dispensations, and will judge what keeps and breaks the Sabbath, supported by the Law (Matt. xii. 5) and the prophets" (ver. 7). The view of this scholar then upholds most strongly the belief, that Christ kept the Law and taught men to keep it, and that His treatment of Sabbath was not an abrogation but an interpretation. For the critical grounds of Dr. Weiss's treatment of the narrative which we have been discussing, I must refer experts to his commentaries.[2]

It would be beyond my competence were I to express any personal judgment on Dr. Weiss's theory. In writing this book[3] I have not desired a better historical basis than is furnished by the Gospel records as they stand. But no one can refuse to compare one record with another, or to weigh interpretations, so far at least as to form an opinion on their internal probability. Let us see, then, what is to be said of Dr. Weiss's solution under this aspect.

[1] Although Dr. Weiss thinks it "removes the strictly legal character" of the Sabbath.

[2] On Matthew and Mark. I need hardly add that such a textual theory must be judged as a whole.

[3] Cp. Preface.

Few readers will hesitate to regard it as an objection to the theory, that it involves so radical a dislocation of the text. There are differences between Matthew, Mark, and Luke, but all versions meet with sweeping condemnation. Nor is one's distrust lessened by the hypothesis, that the origin of the confusion was a deliberate act of mosaic-making on the part of Mark. A theory which cannot explain the origin of the Gospels, except by supposing that the evangelists capriciously carved and grouped the accounts supplied to them by oral tradition, is self-discredited, if not self-condemned. And, when we are told that the analogy between the disciples' conduct and David's is fortuitous, a pretty large strain is put on our power of belief. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that the passages, as separated by Dr. Weiss, explain themselves satisfactorily; and that an unprejudiced study of Matt. xii. 1, *sq.* itself suggests the doubt, whether there was not a reference to miracles of mercy in the discussion; while I, at least, must hold it as evidence, so far as it goes, in favour of Dr. Weiss's view, that he can explain Christ's Lordship of the Sabbath consistently with the maintenance of the Law.

It may be asked, however, whether we cannot retain Dr. Weiss's interpretation of the claim of Lordship, while refusing to accept his theory of the text. I cannot think so. He gives, indeed, an interpretation of the passage as arranged by Mark, somewhat to this effect: "The Sabbath was made for man; therefore the Messiah, who is the great friend of man, must take command of it as of everything else that helps men;" but there is no consecutiveness in these thoughts. The only ground of the inference stated is the nature of the Son of man,

not what is stated as to the original and proper nature of the Sabbath. I must hold, then, that Weiss has not explained the text of Mark, and that, meritorious as his interpretation of Christ's claim of Lordship is in itself, it is inseparably connected with Dr. Weiss's critical dissection of Mark's text. And if, abandoning the question in regard to Mark ii. 27, we seek to retain the interpretation, connecting it with the common text, or with Matthew's fuller version, we fail equally. As the passage stands, Jesus is defending not the duty but the rights of the disciples. It is easy to understand that He should advance His authority to shield His followers from attack in the discharge of His commission; it is hard to believe that He should have silenced a doubt as to the legitimacy of what seemed a breach of the Sabbath—even if that doubt proceeded from the lips of the Pharisees—by the hard assertion that He was entitled to judge on the subject, and not they. Recognizing, then, that we must accept either the whole of Dr. Weiss's theory or none of it, without pretending to close the question, either by deciding in favour of the theory, or by rejecting it, let us proceed to study other interpretations of the passage.

(2) The view of Ritschl, who is in substantial agreement with Meyer, deserves notice, because on this passage the first chapter of the *A. K. Kirche* pivots. On general grounds this interpretation is distasteful to the present writer, as it asserts the repeal of the "commandment of Sabbath rest" so far as concerns the disciples. Ritschl's view, like Weiss's, is connected with critical presuppositions; but they are of a simpler nature. Both scholars regard Mark as the earliest of our Gospels; but, while Weiss, on the whole and in this

particular passage, regards our Lord's words as more literally reported by Matthew, in dependence on the Apostolic Source, Ritschl accepts Mark's peculiarities as of special authority, not only as regards Christ's history, but as regards His teaching. In explaining this passage, he builds on the connection of Mark ii. 27 with ver. 28, and charges Matthew and Luke with omitting ver. 27. Jesus, on this view, distinguishes between two classes of commandments—those temporary ordinances which were "made for man," and those eternal laws for which "man was made." The first class Jesus, as Messiah, claims the right to repeal. And the Pharisees are left to assume that the disciples, who had acted under Jesus' sanction, had been encouraged to emancipate themselves from the fourth commandment. On this view, I suppose, the arguments in Matthew[1] will have the following meaning: the temporary law of the Sabbath, and other like commands, showed their imperfection in the fact that they admitted of occasional breaches—as, by David, and by the priests —even during the Old Dispensation, as well as in the fact that prophets[2] announced those principles, which logically involve the abolition of the temporary laws. Ritschl tries to show that Christ treated all the laws of Moses according to the distinction here revealed, confirming them, or emancipating His disciples from them. But is such an interpretation natural? Surely Christ

[1] Not according to Meyer (on Mark). See his extraordinary statement of the grammatical necessities of the passage. One can only say, If this is a correct account of Mark's statement, that cannot have been a correct account of the historical state of the case.

[2] Ritschl (*A. K. Kirche*, 33) holds that this citation by our Lord nowhere appears in its proper context.

would not describe temporary laws as "made for man," in distinction from permanent laws! Even Meyer renders, The Sabbath has been made as a means for man's highest moral ends; and to this interpretation, following in the wake of most commentaries, we may heartily assent.

But the theory may remain, though one part be given up. It represents our Lord as habitually breaking the (physical and outward) rest of the Sabbath, and encouraging His disciples to do so. His Sabbath miracles, therefore, appear as breaches of the Law, revealing the spirit of a higher religion. It is true, this is guarded on two sides by Meyer and by Ritschl. The former declares that Christ's language in Mark ii. 28 explicitly represents His breach of the Law as a higher fulfilment after the manner of Matt. v. 17,—*i.e.*, as a spiritual reformation of the day. Ritschl declares that the day was abolished, with other ordinances, only for the disciples, while the people at large were commanded to keep the Law, and even to respect the scribes (Mark i. 44; Matt. xxiii. 2). But these qualifications are trivial. They do not modify our difficulty in accepting the theory that Christ broke the Sabbath. The difficulty is this: why did He not say so? Meyer might reply, that Christ was fulfilling the Sabbath in the highest sense, instead of "absolutely abrogating" it; but plainly His fulfilment is supposed to be consistent with "absolute abrogation" of the Jewish rest; and, so long as His arguments remained ambiguous, our Lord must have led the Jews to believe, that He wished to appear as one who was no enemy to that rest. Ritschl might reply, that Christ was not bound to intimate a right of the citizens of the kingdom, such as this freedom, to those

who, like the Pharisees, refused to enter the kingdom. But that answer would only raise the further question, Would it have been possible to abolish the Sabbath for the elect, without lessening its authority over the impenitent? Does it not appear, on this construction of His meaning, that our Lord's life, here as everywhere, manifested His gospel,—that it declared the abrogation of the Sabbath?[1] And how can He reveal the new life in His actions, and darken the knowledge of it by His words? Or how can He speak only to bewilder His enemies and leave them perplexed? We should have expected Him, as a man of honour, to say, The Sabbath was holy, but I have abolished it for My people. In this very passage, where He is alleged to have gone so far, we should have expected Him to go further; to say not only, I have power over the Law you idolize, but, I have power, and, in my power, I summon all men to a holier and more spiritual worship. We cannot then, by a strained interpretation of an isolated text, be compelled to adopt a view which conflicts with the general bearing of the Gospel records, and which insinuates a painful suspicion of our Lord's mode of action.

(3) It might be held that Christ claimed immunity from ceremonial law, at the least, as God, or as the lawgiver. Matt. xvii. 26 might be quoted as a parallel. But Christ declares the very contrary. And even the facts which this suggestion abuses for its support do not support it. In Matt. xvii. 26 Christ is not speaking of a special Divine immunity, but of an immunity

[1] On this view, I should suppose that the question of Luke vi. 9 must be a piece of irony, retorting on the Pharisees their favourite weapon of attack.

shared by His disciples, and an immunity which in practice He surrenders. In this passage also He is claiming nothing for Himself, but is defending His disciples.

(4) We have therefore found no alternative theory to Dr. Weiss's. I would venture, however, with some diffidence, to suggest another—not announcing a settled opinion, but offering a suggestion. Any theory to be considered with favour must satisfy several conditions. It must maintain the context as it is given in the Gospels. It must, in accordance with what we have learnt elsewhere, represent Christ as fulfilling and not as surreptitiously attacking the Law. It must give a tenable explanation of the connection in Mark ii. 27, 28.

At this point I would begin. Ritschl, who counts this passage of the greatest importance, traces no connection between "man" in ver. 27 and "Son of man" in ver. 28, but may we not find a connection? We know that "Son of man" is taken from Dan. vii. 13, and that its use was a designedly indirect claim of Messiahship. Are we not at liberty to infer more about it? Fastening our eyes on the logical connection of the verses, have we not a hint given us that, here at least, it may mean "representative man"? The verses will then signify, "The Sabbath was made for man's good, not man for its sake; and therefore the representative man may control the Sabbath with ideal freedom." On this view the last verse is not a claim of legislative right but a maxim of conduct. It claims Lordship for the Christ, indeed, not for Christians; but the claim is justified by the original destination of the day to man's good, and it is put forward on behalf of the disciples. The underlying thought is, With legalism,

no Sabbath; without liberty, no Christian Sabbath. The various arguments will run as follows: If David and his followers out of need, the priests in the temple in furtherance of their duty, broke the Sabbath, may not the Son of David and His followers, in the enjoyment of the new life, and in the exercise of its privileges, ignore trivial forms for the sake of the spirit of the day?[1] The vindication of Christian freedom (cf. Matt. xvii. 26) is a sufficient motive for Jesus' allowing the disciples' conduct, and for His making Himself a partner in it after the event. If the concluding verse enunciates a principle of conduct, then, as it stands, our Lord's answer to the Pharisees is complete, without being helped out by the supply of a minor premise. They said, You are allowing the Sabbath to be broken. He said, I am keeping it in my own way, and that the highest possible way, which corresponds to the ideal of the day. The allusion to David itself, we may note, makes us expect a vindication of Christ's *conduct.*

We have asked whether Christ kept the ceremonial law. Our answer has been that He did. We have based this answer on His own declarations about His life, on the known manner of His life, on the tacit admission of His enemies, and on the line of defence which He took when He was charged with Sabbath-breaking. Sometimes He spoke of His conduct as lawful; at other times He sheltered Himself behind

[1] Matt. xii. 7 will mean, Your harsh suspicions are anything rather than honouring to God. Or, as Ritschl suggests, it may be inserted from a different context. The aim of the previous illustrations will be to suggest our Lord's Messiahship, as the ground of that Christian freedom shown in the boldness of the disciples, and expounded in Christ's words.

precedent; He never admitted that He was leading a revolution. One passage, indeed, is contested; but, after examination, we have found only two views of the passage that are at all plausible; of which the first represents Christ as trustee of the Sabbath law; and the second, as the highest model of Sabbath observance. We have not spent any time over the theory which affirms that Christ kept the Sabbath and all the Law, only because it denies Christ to have been more than a legalist. Such criticism by scissors needs no skill and deserves no respect. In the present case, it is irreconcilable with that saying of Christ's which has occupied the greater part of our time—a saying as well verified as anything in the Gospel history.

Although we have let the question stand unbalanced between an interpretation which rests on high authority, but which is obnoxious because of the violence it does to the text of the Gospels, and another interpretation, resting on no authority, which escapes that objection, there are other objections which may be brought against the latter view in order to procure its overthrow. It may be said that we have proved, not that Christ kept the Law, but that He broke it. It may be said that Lordship of the Sabbath, in our sense, would be not the beau-ideal observance of it, but the very opposite of its observance. It may be said, that our view charges Christ with that very disingenuousness to which we objected in Dr. Ritschl's view. I am not blind to the plausibleness and the gravity of these objections. But may I suggest, that only one kind of criticism, the criticism of learning, could be fatal to my tentative theory, though it, perhaps, very readily might be so? All these other objections, it will appear

on reflection, attach no more to our theory than to the facts of our Lord's life. It is different with Dr. Ritschl's theory. That view implies that Christ concealed in His words a divergence from Judaism, which His actions daily widened. Our theory asserts that Christ was loyal to Judaism, and yet was the source of a new faith. All that it implies of reticence is, that He used the wise man's right of choosing what to tell and what not to tell. To the Pharisees He simply pled "not guilty;" they had no right to hear more, and they heard no more. Do my critics really suppose that Christ kept any of the Jewish Law in a Jewish spirit? Is He not an example to Christians throughout His life? It is merely one specimen of this, if, not breaking the Sabbath, and conceding nothing to His enemies' cavils, He so kept the day of rest as to Christianise it. Is it not true, that in all His life there was much to justify the Pharisees' suspicions,—that in all His life He was inaugurating a new era, in which His disciples should be swept away from all that the Pharisees loved? Yet, none the less, He kept the Law.[1]

[1] Appendix B., The Observance of Sunday.

CHAPTER V.

CHRIST'S ETHICAL TEACHING.

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WE have seen that Christ claimed to fulfil the unrealised ideal of the Old Covenant, and, at the same time, that He continued to respect all its detailed arrangements. In accordance with our plan of study, we ought now to have discussed Christ's criticism of the moral law. But, after our study has advanced to the present point, it cannot surprise us to find, that Christ nowhere criticises the moral law. To Him, the Old Testament is God's revelation; and, while He is conscious of bringing a new revelation, He knows that He does so by fulfilling the Law and the Prophets. Even when we expect Him to criticise the old law, He criticises by preference[1] the defects of the Pharisees. Nor does He even speak about the adjustment of the stages of revelation. Like all the Scripture writers, He passes by the theoretical question; for the difficulty as to the place of the Old Testament in the Christian Church, though it often has very practical bearings, is in its root theoretical; and Scripture does not solve our problems, but lays down principles. Scripture does not even feel our difficulties; the life is still too fresh for the entrance of reflection. Paul him-

[1] Above, ch. iii., p. 52.

self, who runs to the finest the antithesis of law and grace, quotes the Law, without a word of explanation, as an authority for Christians.

Yet, in spite of Christ's silence, it will be needful for us to summarise His ethical teaching, and to put it in contrast with Old Testament ethic. In this way we shall, from one side, reach the very heart of the new revelation; if we omitted this, we should misunderstand the very centre of Christ's originality. And the misunderstanding would spread over all parts of His teaching; for all His teaching, as we shall find, is vitally affected by His ethical principles. Perhaps it is unfortunate that we should need to extemporise a sketch, if not of Christian ethic, of Christ's ethic. At any rate, it is unavoidable. Our language is not rich in Biblical Theology; and, if it were, it is unlikely that any standard discussion would exactly answer the purpose of the present chapter.

But what do we mean by speaking of ethical teaching? We do not mean to exclude religious teaching; that would be a wrong both to Christ and to the Old Testament. In the latter, morality is blended not only with religion, but with ritual ordinances and with civil law; while in the teaching of Christ, in spite of the changes He introduces, or rather because of these changes, morality and religion are become the same thing. Christ's religion is purely moral; Christ's morality is wholly religious. Nor by ethical teaching do we mean to denote practical teaching in the narrow sense of the word, to the exclusion of all theoretical elements. Christ's teaching is founded on a religious revelation; and, although His instructions are occasional and popular, not scholastic or systematic, they always presuppose

His revelation. Still, we mean to speak only of those elements of Christ's teaching which can be brought under the head of duty. All that He tells us, whether concerning God or men, that we ought to do,—all that He says in the imperative mood,—belongs to this chapter; whatever He reveals for our contemplation, but not immediately for the quickening of our wills, is excluded from this chapter. Such is the teaching that we call ethical; and in using that name we imply, as I think Christ leads us to do, that moral teaching, which entirely omits the thought of God, mutilates the moral universe. It must be added that we exclude from this sketch of Christ's practical teaching His relation to positive institutions. These He Himself taught separately;[1] and His attitude towards the institutions of the Old Testament was significantly[2] different from His attitude towards its ethical and spiritual teaching.

The first point we have to note in regard to the essential principles of Christ's moral teaching is, that it grew out of the religious revelation He brought This is not dogmatically assumed; its evidence lies in the Gospel records. We have seen how He revered the Old Testament; to understand why His morality is beyond its morality, or how He transformed and perfected its teaching, we have to recur to His position as founder of God's kingdom. Indeed, we shall find that whatever is novel in His teaching of duty, as compared with the Old Testament or with legal teaching, is exactly, barely, the statement of what is implied in His religious revelation. This is consistent with the fact

[1] Appendix C., Christ as Founder of the Visible Church.
[2] See next chapter.

that in much of Christ's teaching, especially of His earlier teaching, duty is far more prominent than the communication of religious truth; what is not always expressed is always implied. Neither element must be allowed to disparage the other. If religion furnishes morality with unity, and completeness, and a motive, morality furnishes breadth and vigour to religion (Matt. vii. 21, xix. 16-22).

Next, we have to observe that Christ, as a religious teacher, addresses a special society. He is not a philosopher; all His moralities are addressed to the members of His kingdom. In this we see that His morality presupposes grace. The deliverance of Israel from Egypt at the founding of the Old Covenant was God's redemptive act; and the founding of the kingdom of God by Christ was His redemptive and gracious work. If He speaks then of the kingdom of God as come (Matt. xii. 28; cf. xiii. 16, etc., etc.), it is not merely, though chiefly, because He is come, but because He is surrounded by His Church,—in the first instance, by Israel, so far as Israel was faithful and repentant; later on, by chosen disciples and ordained apostles.

Before proceeding to the details of Christ's commands to His followers, it may be well to study the most formal utterance recorded—the nearest approach to a system—in His teaching: I mean the Sermon on the Mount. This sermon begins with the Beatitudes. These themselves may be taken as an informal enunciation of the graces of Christian character, as nearly ormal as Christ ever was. If we do not dwell on them, it is because they announce gifts rather than require duties. But we must not ignore the meaning

of that very fact. The very law-giving of the Kingdom —what is as nearly a legislation as the nature of the Kingdom will allow—what is as nearly formal as Christ's teaching ever is—begins, not with laws, but with blessings. This implies, not only that there were good men in the world to welcome Christ—ready-made saints, as it were, who merely needed investiture—that the Spirit of God was to some extent abroad in the world even before the Baptism and Pentecost, but that this kingdom imparts righteousness, makes men poor in spirit, makes them rich in faith, makes them blessed while they mourn. The cleft between law and life is filled up as soon as the kingdom of God is in the world. "Ye are the salt of the earth." "Ye are the light of the world." A change, this, from "Thou shalt," still more from "Thou shalt not!"

The next part of the sermon, as we have already seen, explains that Christ's purpose is to serve God, not to depart from His word; to establish righteousness, not to relax its claims. We then have a statement of Christ's teaching in contrast to the Pharisaic view of the Law. The general result is to remove the merely legal character from God's revelation as conceived by the people, and to give it an absolute or ethical character. Addressed to the citizens of the Kingdom, the old law of Israel blossoms out into a legislation for an ideal community. Statute law condemns murder; the founder of God's kingdom sees that His society would be marred and defiled by anger. Adultery is a "crime against society;" the well-being of Christ's society would be tarnished by lust. The victim of a sin against conjugal faithfulness receives through the civil judge such poor redress as is possible;

in Christ's society,[1] where the very approaches to such a crime rank as impossible, there is to be no counting upon such provisions of law. Similarly, the oath is a device, good or bad, to protect society from evil-doers; it "is of evil;" where men always act and speak as in God's presence, oaths are to be abolished. Law punishes injury by compensating injury; but, in the ideal society, self-seeking is abolished; hence self-vindication is ideally out of place. Lastly, the mere patriot loves his country, and his country alone; but the Christian, who belongs to a society which has the instinct and the destiny of catholicity, knows that all men are his fellow-citizens, and is to love even the brother who does him wrong.[2]

The next section (Matt. vi. 1-18) contains those religious rules which Christ promulgated. The Lord's Prayer is introduced here as the model of prayer. Like the Beatitudes, it is of the highest importance; it contains in itself Christ's pattern of religion. The fundamental element in this revelation is the Fatherhood of God. The name of God in this ethical society[3] corresponds to the ethical nature of the society; it is

[1] See Mark x. 11. Ritschl, *A. K. Kirche*, p. 31. Weiss, in *New Testament Theology*, § 24.

[2] Substantially as in Weiss. The author of *Ecce Homo* (ch. xxiii.) decides, from a comparison of this passage with Matt. xviii. 15, that "Christ held injuries inflicted by heathen to stand on a materially different footing from those committed by Christians." He forgets that he is comparing the paradoxes of an ideal legislation with practical social rules. And he forgets Matt. xviii. 22, "Forgive *thy brother* until seventy times seven."

[3] Ritschl, *Justification*, iii., p. 81, § 18.

not legal, but filial. It extends to Christ's followers the filial standing of Christ Himself. It must not, therefore, in the interests of men at large, be diluted into a paternity of benevolence; men must enrol themselves in the Kingdom (Matt. v. 3) in order to be called sons (v. 9), and to hear the command, "When ye pray, say, Our Father." But, in speaking to His followers, and in prayer to the Father, the name is habitual with our Lord (*e.g.*, v. 16, 45, vi. 1, 4, 6, 8, 14, 15, 18, vii. 11, 21, xxvi. 39, 42; cf. Jas. iii. 9; 1 Peter i. 17; 1 Cor. viii. 6).

Nor was this name a bare word. Implicitly, reconciliation of men to God and the forgiveness of men by God were both contained in it. In our Lord's Prayer those who call God Father appear bound to show resignation, faith in His providence, and absolute devotion to His glory; they are to seek His kingdom first of all things; while God appears as providing for their necessities, forgiving their sins, and yielding them strength and guidance. The children trust the Father, obey Him, and seek His mercy; the Father cares for the children, assures them of the best gift in promising His love, and undertakes a personal solicitude over their personal difficulties; for that which God teaches us to ask He promises to give. Such are, in outline, the lessons of the Lord's Prayer.

The following section (vi. 19, *sq.*), though probably inserted in Matthew in a connection originally foreign to it, contains Christ's leading principle, that the kingdom of God is to be the first aim in life. He vindicates this place for it in relation to the claims and temptations of worldly care, as He elsewhere (xx. 26; see also the Parable of the Sower) guards it against

worldly ambition. Further than this we need not carry the present statement.

The general contrast of this teaching with the doctrine of the Old Testament may be expressed in a word: it is legal; this is ethical. It attributed sonship to Israel, or to the king as head of the people; this teaching makes the filial name and spirit the property of all. The Old Testament promised blessings of this world; Christ offers a *summum bonum*, in whose light all other blessings are indifferent. The Old Testament Church was a national society, founded on rights, such as the right of conquest; prosperity alone was the seal of God's favour. Christ's kingdom is a society, not for securing men in their rights, but for enabling them to do right. In order to enter it, men must consent to self-abnegation. They have no rights, in comparison with the claims of God's kingdom as a whole; personal property, the family, the nation, life itself, all must be sacrificed, if need be, to the interests of God and of Humanity. The Christian has "only one right—to do his duty;" and, if that includes the right to count upon God's effectual grace and upon His encouraging presence, this very right is of grace, and founded on God's self-sacrifice in Christ. In the Old Testament, on the other hand, there was at least the appearance of legal right. The traces of individual piety which appear in the Wisdom literature and in the Book of Psalms at any rate seem to retain this claim of legal dues, awkward though such a claim is in the individual. Hence, too, they often disclose a perplexed intellect, and a disordered conscience. The ceremonial sacrifices were partly inadequate to these religious necessities, partly unadapted to them. There

was need of a better sacrifice. And, in the light of Christ, self-seeking is gone, and merit is gone, not only because the sinner is unable to attain it, but because it is unworthy of Christ's follower.

Here we may delay for a moment to speak of the relation of Christ's teaching in this passage to the Atonement. M. Godet says, "A religious party has made a party-banner of this discourse. According to them, this discourse is a summary of the teaching of Jesus, who merely spiritualised the moral law. But how are we to harmonise with this view the passages in which Jesus makes attachment to His person the very centre of the new righteousness (*for My sake*, Matt. v. 11; *for the sake of the Son of man*, Luke vi. 22), and those in which He announces Himself as the Final and Supreme Judge (Matt. vii. 21-23, compared with Luke vi. 46, Lord, Lord!)?" So far, we are thoroughly with M. Godet. But what shall we say to his concluding sentence? "The true view of the religious import of this discourse is that which Gess has expressed in these well-weighed words, 'The Sermon on the Mount describes that earnest piety which no one can cultivate without an increasing feeling of the need of *redemption*, by means of which the righteousness required by such piety may at last be realised.'"[1] Is our Lord's teaching then antiquated? Certainly, what M. Godet speaks of may be one Christian use of Christ's teaching, but surely not the whole or chief use! Let the Law shut us up to Christ by all means; but do not let us make Christ a pedagogue, to lead us to Paul!

[1] Godet on Luke, Clark's translation, i., 335-6.

The Sermon on the Mount is not describing a religion of the unredeemed. Certainly, it does not explicitly speak of Christ's work; as certainly it implies it. True, that the atonement was not finished. True, that Christ spoke of *founding* the New Covenant long afterwards when He came to die. But not true, that the atonement was not begun. Not true, that what was perfectly manifested, and was finished, in Christ's death, whether for God or for man, whether in reference to sin or to righteousness, was not contained in the soul of Him who spoke, and that it was not growing in the proper perfection of its development through stage after stage of His life. He spoke to the redeemed, for He was the Redeemer. And, while the dogmatic view of Christ's death may claim to be the complement of the ethical view of Christian experience, now before us, it must not be allowed to exclude Christian ethic from our view. Both the sense of deliverance from sin and the sense of Christian consecration for service imply the work of Christ; both are needed for following Christ.

To return; religion in the Old Testament was formally a legal thing. But religion is subtly elastic. It is always ready to put a deeper meaning into the forms of thought which body forth our relations with God, and to change laws into gifts of grace, rights into prayers. In those aspects of religion, however, which look not towards God but towards men, even religious persons are very much dependent on the standard to which they have been trained to aspire. Even religion can make herself at home in the presence of a very undeveloped code of conduct or social ideal. In form,

the Old Testament theory of duty between man and man was confined to the letter of law, and restricted to members of the nation. Christ's society for the doing of duty necessarily changes this. There is no limit to duties; there is no outlaw on God's earth. Christ is universalist, therefore, from the centre outwards, and what He implies He expresses on occasion.

We have seen Christ's central conception. Let us now examine the details in which His teaching, governed by that conception, alters the Hebrew theory of duty, more especially towards men.

(1) First, Law confines itself to commanding, or, often, to forbidding outward actions; Christ's morality[1] reaches to motive and desire. It is true that the form of a law does not always cover its real spiritual currency. It is true that, just as Old Testament piety put a deep meaning into the apparent relations of right between God and man, so goodness, even under the Old Covenant, may have refused to stop at the outside, and may have ruled the heart. But this, which formerly was a Divine accident, but could not be commanded, is now the rule of Christ's kingdom. For His judgment, a good action done from false or defective motives is not a good action at all; while, of course, no motive ranks as good unless it issues in right conduct. We are to "do the will" of God (Matt. vii. 21); "from the heart" (xviii. 35) we are to forgive our brethren. And, since Christ demands right deeds, done in the right spirit, He cannot begin with an external system, planned for the education and gradual development of virtue, but puts first of all the loftiest,

[1] *Ecce Homo*, ch. xiii.

or at least the hardest demands, and the promise of a Spirit who shall guide with unerring wisdom and holy power.

(2) A second novel feature in Christ's teaching is the stress laid upon active morality.[1] Negative duties, in the ethical sphere, give place to positive; the bad spirit is to be driven out, not by scourges or vigils, but by the entrance of a good Spirit. The kingdom of God is not only the most important, but the only aim of life; it includes all that is worthy; it refuses to dwell with whatever is base. It gives, not a regulation merely, but an impulse; it changes "thou shalt not" into "follow me." This, too, results from the very nature of the kingdom. When God is known as Father, and men as brethren, it becomes not only wrong, but ridiculous, to yield to selfishness, or to seek any private end. The power of the new gospel is seen as in a picture in that outburst of charity in the early Church which astonished Pagan critics, and which so baffled Gibbon that he adduced it in its own explanation. The spirit of the new gospel breathes, too, in that "Golden Rule," in which,[2] knowing its organic connection with what He did and taught, Christ was content that "the law and the prophets" should be summed up: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them" (Matt. vii. 12). This is the rule, not of man's conduct only, but of God's judgment. For, in accordance with His law of active benevolence, Christ (xxv. 31) will judge the very heathen by the test, whether they have shown active practical sympathy towards the poor, His brethren.

[1] *Ecce Homo*, ch. xvi., *et passim*.

[2] Ch. ii., p. 20; ch. viii., p. 169.

(3) A third point of contrast between Christ's teaching and Old Testament ethic appears in regard to the forgiveness of injuries. Here we approach close to the centre of His revelation. Forgiveness is of the forgiven. Christ taught this, and required the forgiving spirit from all His disciples (Matt. v. 23, vi. 12, *sq.*, xviii. 35). On the other hand, this very point of placability, like the central religious virtue of resignation to God's will, was strangely obscured in virtue of the conditions of Old Testament revelation. The Psalms breathe far oftener the spirit of impatience and of revenge than that of patience and forgiveness. For law in many cases seems to reinforce the natural vehemence of outraged feeling, to add fuel to its fires, to give a Divine and moral sanction to its fierce anger. When a man feels not only pained but wronged, he thinks himself weak as well as wretched if he does not right himself. But, in the kingdom of God, in a life where the great good to be gained is a universal brotherhood of worship, a man is raised above the narrow horizon of the legalist; his point of view is that of absolute goodness. For the sake of the kingdom of God he forgets himself; for its sake it is easy to let private wrongs slip.

(4) A fourth point of contrast has reference, not to the content of Christ's teaching as compared with Old Testament ethic, or with law in general, but to its form. Christ's teaching is occasional, aphoristic, paradoxical, practical. A system must be systematic; from the foundation to the summit everything must be orderly and consecutive. The Old Testament law is a system; in its ceremonial parts, at all events, it is minutely literal, and every deliberate

breach of its letter is a sin visited by death. Practical ethic, on the other hand, as distinguished from ethical philosophy and from ritual law, must needs be popular in order to be effective, and resigns the hope of scholastic nicety and wholeness. The prophets were practical teachers; the unity of their teaching is in the spirit, not in any explicit system. Christ, too, was a teacher of the people; but, beyond all other men, He uses paradox with incomparable boldness. The fact is connected fundamentally with His vocation to found an absolutely ethical community, in which everything depends upon the inward disposition. For His purpose it was undesirable to fetter men's minds too tightly even with His own words. He, therefore, speaks pictorially, emphatically, paradoxically, in order by any means to move the sluggish hearts of men, and in order to quicken them till they show the spontaneous movements of life. The form of words is only a husk; the teacher's wisdom seeks to make form and principle obviously two separate things, that His disciples may throw away the husk of paradox and live by the truth He communicates.

In this way we find an explanation of the manner of Christ's law-giving in the Sermon on the Mount. To apply it immediately to practice would be impossible, even to Socialists and Quakers. Why, then, it may be asked, did Christ give an ideal legislation? Is the kingdom of God, which He came to clothe with reality, vanishing again into the mists of the ideal as soon as it has appeared in men's sight? Christ's statements are not even the ideal of ultimate progress; law, polity, institutions, as Christ Himself recognised, have their place both in Church and State. He nevertheless uses

an ideal statement, for by means of an ideal statement He can best work actual results. We might be asked, if the law-giving in Matt. v. is not a slightly irregular exposition of the Decalogue? but this ignores the tone of Christ's teaching both there and elsewhere. Strange exposition! Christ found men refusing His service under the pretext of duty at home, and He cried,[1] "Hate your parents!" He found men hugging to themselves an ideal of goodness, which was only half true,—a religious legalism, the Decalogue, or what not; and He cried, "Away with society, away with oaths, away with self-defence; make yourselves the victims both of craft and violence, as I yield myself to both!" He found men priding themselves on their rights, saying, "I have a right to do what I like with my own, so long as I respect others' rights,"—thinking that in this all their duty was exhausted; He replied, "You have no rights,—not one!" And He held up to men the kingdom of God as an ideal society, not telling them merely what rules should govern their conduct, but showing them a picture of simplicity and mutual confidence and right-heartedness, impossible of being copied in the world. Strange as such teaching may seem, it was most wise and most needful. Nothing is harder to expel from men's minds than a half truth. No snare of sin is half so dangerous an enemy to goodness as an imperfect ideal. Christ found men buried in self-esteem,—professing to look for the Messiah, but

[1] Luke xiv. 26. It may be said that in Matt. v. we have the tenth commandment as in the report in Matthew (xix. 19)—though only as in the report in Matthew—of our Lord's conversation with the young ruler. Perhaps this would be to reason in a circle.

destroying everything that afforded outlook to a better future or made the Messiah's work possible; Christ did everything He could to startle and allure them towards the better life He had to give. For us the lesson is, Every right may be suspended by the claims of God's kingdom. And again, If in your own personal life, in the family, in the state, your motive is not the desire to hasten God's kingdom, better for you that you were mutilated or dead, your family a wreck, your nation pillaged and laid waste. And again, Take heed to Christ's words, that you worship them not idolatrously, but daily obey the spirit that speaks to your own heart through Christ and His words, whether it prompts to what is familiar or to what is strange.

(5) One point yet remains to be noted in regard to Christ's detailed teaching of the principles of life. It has reference to an external circumstance. Old Testament ethic was ethic for a nation. Foreigners were to be treated kindly, but they had no rights. Indeed, when foreigners became enemies, Old Testament religion condemned them coldly to massacre. Now Christ's teaching, which so quietly and so thoroughly transformed Old Testament ideals, began with the central ethical conceptions, and only by degrees, when occasion arose, touched upon external questions. He preached humanity and God's Fatherhood; but we do not find Him inscribing on His banners the universal brotherhood of mankind. Yet He taught, when asked, that nationality did not limit duty.

There are difficulties connected with the narrative which introduces the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 25-37). It recals, first, the narrative of the young ruler (Matt. xix. 16 and parallels); secondly,

the lawyer of Matt. xxii. 35, Mark xii. 28. If our narrative is correct,[1] then the lawyer of this passage, with his combination of two citations from the Pentateuch in Jesus' own spirit, must have been a remarkable religious genius; unless we cut the knot by supposing that he spoke after Jesus answered the lawyer of Matt. xxii., and that he merely parroted Jesus' own words; an unwarranted supposition, which runs counter to the impression of the passage, and to such indications of chronology as we find in the Gospels. But, in any case, critical doubts as to the setting do not touch the substance of the parable, which vouches[2] for its own authenticity. Jesus then, on being asked to whom one should show neighbourly love, answered, To him whom God's providence throws in our way, even should he belong to an alien and hated nation.

So far we have spoken only of the essential principles of Christ's ethical teaching. Our statement would be incomplete, and liable to attack, did it say nothing of the temporary details in which that teaching was involved. It is inevitable that ethical teaching, given in a practical form, should bear, to an exceptional degree, the marks of the circumstances under which it arose. A system is in a different position; it must be judged directly, on its merits, as it applies to all or any circumstances; for a system claims to impart universal wisdom. But occasional teaching speaks directly only

[1] Bleek (*Stud. u. Krit*, 1853, p. 301) suggests that our Lord must have drawn out the answer by a Socratic questioning.

[2] "The apocryphal gospels contain no parables."—Dean Plumptre in Smith's *Biblical Dictionary*.

to what occasioned it. Hence, in loyalty to Christ, when we seek to carry with us His lessons and apply them to fresh cases, we are bound to distinguish between those sayings and teachings which hold good for all time, and those which were externally conditioned by obsolete needs in a bygone age.

(1) First of all, Christ's ethic is in a certain contrast to Old Testament ethic. This in itself does not, of course, tinge Christ's teaching with particularism. What He taught was for all; what the Law and the Prophets had already taught in Israel was the truest introduction to Christianity. Nevertheless, it was inevitable that Christ should state His teaching in allusion to, and in contrast with, the tenets of a revealed faith, which, after all, was only a stage, and, therefore, an imperfect stage, in God's education of the Church. Christ taught Jews. It was inevitable that He should lay more stress on those Christian virtues which they were hereditarily apt to disregard, than on those to which they were already trained. It was inevitable that He should often correct the assumptions which limited the Old Testament outlook, while rarely reaffirming its attainments. The nett result, to speak generally, is, that the passive or feminine virtues, so new to the world, are placed in a strong light, while the masculine or active virtues—I do not say the virtues of active morality—are comparatively little mentioned.

To speak first of the religious virtues; patience and resignation are all but strangers to the Old Testament. Its afflicted saints are far oftener impatient; "Thy will be done" is a prayer which they do not readily frame. And this is natural. For, before the perfect sacrifice of Christ, confidence in God's mercy took its

rise from particular occasions,—a legally correct sacrifice, a providential deliverance, a gift of happiness,—and it was equally liable to be overthrown by interrupting accidents. Death itself always menaced, till Christ brought life and immortality to light. Of course we can cite isolated passages which alter all this,—which speak of endurance (Psalm xxxix. 9), resignation (Micah vii. 9), triumph over death (Psalm xvi. 10), just as we can quote passages in which each Old Testament limitation is transcended. But these, in the Old Testament, remain isolated passages. It is Christ's perfected reconciliation of God with men that produces resignation to all God's ways. In patience, in the likeness of Christ, he that is least in the kingdom of God is greater than all the saints of earlier days.

The moral virtues of the Old Testament were, of course, coloured by its religious incompleteness, and by what we may call its worldly attitude. For the Old Testament faith was cosmical; national in form, it was unconscious of the possibility of a conflict with the natural virtues of the family, and of the race; it moved among the relations of this life, finding in these its sphere and material, its rewards and its sanctions. Joy was the gift of God's approval; sorrow and death were His sudden punishment for sin. "Prosperity," in Bacon's words, "was the blessing of the Old Covenant." Christ's favour for the poor had, of course, its anticipations from prophets and psalmists; but Christ first made it a principle. He thus completed the reversal of the original Old Testament mode of judgment. With it, God's favoured patriarchs had sheep, and oxen, and menservants, and maidservants, and wives, and riches innumerable; the "happy nation

whose God was Jehovah" was distinguished by an "unexampled prosperity" like that in which modern political optimists rejoice. But Christ's blessings on the poor, the mourners, the meek, the hungry, announce an unworldly mode of judgment, which is warranted only by Christ's supernatural life and revelation.

Again, in the Old Testament God is thought of as the defender of His people's rights, the enemy of their enemies, their avenger (*e.g.*, Psalms xviii., xciv.). Even a David cannot abide in the high temper which forgives. The passive endurance of wrong seemed a weakness, for it seemed to argue desertion by God; "not he hath done it, but God," expresses the full bitterness of spirit which wrongs then awoke. But, with Christ, the offending brother is to be forgiven always (Matt. xviii. 21). It is unnecessary to repeat how strictly this is connected with Christ's religious revelation.

Closely associated with the forgiveness of injuries is another Christian virtue, which might have been placed among the religious virtues, but which almost always has reference to our fellow-men; I mean cross-bearing. If patience is rare in the Old Testament, self-denial, strange though this may seem to us, lies wholly beyond its horizon. Not even patient in bearing what God sends, Old Testament saints do not dream of voluntarily giving up happiness for God's sake. Happiness was, as yet, too nearly identified with God's will and with His favour to be made a sacrifice. By Christ it is demanded of all; alike the sacrifice of self for men's good, and the subjection of self to God's glory. This is only another and a more emphatic way of saying, that active benevolence and

absolute self-devotion are universal rules in Christ's kingdom.

Now, there is certainly nothing narrow or temporary in the currency which Christ's teaching gives to these virtues. They are essential parts of His revelation, and an essential advance on the Old Testament. Yet they are, in a sense, one-sidedly prominent. They are apt to produce the impression that they are the whole of piety, and that Christianity is a sort of union of resignation with benevolence. Even if Christ's own teaching is too balanced to have any responsibility for such impressions, the novelty of its newer features is so great that they tend to make us forget the universal elements of religion. Truth, uprightness, courage, honesty, justice, are plain virtues, which no more can become obsolete than we can outgrow the fresh air or the daylight. Faith and love, hope and fear, repentance and joy in God, are the uniform materials of all religious experience; they are found alike in the Old Testament and in the New; they may be variously compounded and shaped, but essentially they can neither be reduced in number nor added to. Christ's words are the crown of all teaching; but His stranger messages gain, and need, special prominence with an untaught or differently trained audience. It is eternally true that the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom, and abidingly true that the gospel is for the poor; but, while the first is a truth for all men at all times, the other is especially a comfort for the down-trodden, a warning for the plutocrat and the Pharisee. We might debase the faith of Christ, if we hawked about its blessings on the lowly in order to gain favour for ourselves

with the mob. Ebionism is not catholic Christianity; nor, it may be added, does womanliness cover the Christian ideal of character.

(2) Secondly, Christ's teaching, like all practical teaching, is directed in detail chiefly against the evils that were most prominent at the time when it was given. Only in so far as these evils are permanent, or have prominence at a later time, are Christ's individual warnings directly applicable by His Church to modern society.

The evils of Christ's age were chiefly the defects inherent in the Pharisee ideal of conduct, or fostered by it. This brings us again by a direct road to a warning we noticed under the last head, the warning against covetousness. Covetousness (Luke xvi. 14, Mark xii. 40, and Luke xx. 47) was a characteristic fault of Pharisees. Their vulgar externalising of the Old Testament code, their abstinence from political effort, the ban which their inherited ethic laid on many human interests—all tended to foster the vice. (A modern parallel, as we see, may give living force and interest even to detailed warnings).—Christ met the evil, not merely by sentimental praises of poverty, but by searching admonitions against care, ambition, covetousness, as diseases of the heart.

Again, truth between man and man is the first element in goodness; merely formal, the mere beginning in virtue, it is yet the foundation and training-school of all virtue. We have seen how casuistry endangers this, the root of virtue; we have found reason to suspect that Pharisaism had actually provided men with authorised evasions of the obligation of honour. And, therefore, while Christ's

declaration that "whatsoever is more than yea, yea, nay, nay, is of evil" (Matt. v. 37), seems addressed to the ideal audience who peopled His ideal kingdom, we should not wonder if it could be proved one of Christ's practical counsels to that distracted age, "Swear not at all." In view of such a sin as systematic treachery, no inhibition could seem extravagant. Mortal diseases need vigorous remedies.

Once again. If truth, the bond of all business and of all casual intercourse, is paramount in the personal character, of paramount importance to the social organism is the virtue of purity. Society depends on the family; family life depends on the purity of men and women. No sin was oftener denounced by Christ than that of adultery (see Matt. xii. 39, xvi. 4; Mark viii. 38). And, if we often doubt how His denunciations are to be understood, whether of the sin against marriage, or of the licentious use of lax laws (Matt. v. 32, xix. 9), or of the spiritual sin of covenant breaking, described in the language in which prophecy had rebuked the apostasy of Israel, still one passage at least (John viii. 8) gives a terribly black picture of the age, and Christ's teaching as to the marriage law shows that for Him the practice of the age was a thing of vital moment, and of deadly evil. For a law may work differently at different times,—it depends partly on the temper of those who work it; and that imperfect law, given first "for men's hardness of heart," was now worked by Pharisees. It is important to compare Christ's treatment of this question with His evasion of other problems propounded by the Pharisees. This, He

recognised, belonged to His sphere. This was a vital question for holiness towards God and for the life of His kingdom. He, therefore (Matt. xix. 3), used His[1] authority to declare the truth on this point. But He appealed to Moses; He pointed out, with historical accuracy, that Moses' sanction of divorce was a permission and no proper part of the law of commandments; by going back to "the beginning," He appealed to God's will seen in creation; and by quoting Genesis He placed Himself under the protection of the book of the Law in order to be recognised as speaking from God, and in order that the alteration in men's practice which He demanded might not seem "a destruction of the law and the prophets."

Christ, then, replaced Pharisaism by the preaching of purity in heart, and of abstinence from marriage when God requires celibacy in the interests of His kingdom. If anything was needed to convince us of the low tone that prevailed in Palestine at the Christian era on the question of the relations of the sexes,—in Palestine, where God had trained men by history and by the writings of the Old Testament, we should find conviction in the disciples' remark after Christ had stated the law against divorce: "If the case of the man is so with his wife, it is not expedient to marry." To such men it was

[1] It is unquestionable that Jesus here approaches exceptionally near the position of one consciously and deliberately amending legislation. The closest parallel is John iv. 24. In both passages Jesus appeals to the teaching of the Old Testament, and infers a principle not recognised by the Old Testament. See below, ch. vi., pp. 120, 127.

impossible to announce a higher morality than monogamy, varied by celibacy; for such men the higher motives in marriage did not exist; self-denial was the noblest attainment they could be made to conceive. It is true, Protestants will always be tempted to impute some error upon this point to those who heard and handed down the words of Christ; they will always be tempted to distrust the ascetic hints of the Synoptic Gospels. But perhaps these hints, when fairly weighed, are accounted for by the considerations that have just been mentioned; while other features of that age, which are still to be mentioned, and which helped to fashion Christ's precepts, tend to throw a further light on the naturalness of the ascetic element in the words of Christ.

(3) Christ's teaching, like that of all great teachers, harmonises, when it is possible, with the best thought of His age. Such thought has a right to be conciliated, and taken up into the fuller light of new revelation; by so acting revelation reduces to a minimum the offence which it cannot fail to occasion. It is, perhaps, not quite certain whether we owe to Jesus or to the Evangelist the grouping of the three religious observances, alms-giving, fasting, and prayer (Matt. vi. 1-18). But it is certain, on one hand, that these were currently recognised; on the other hand, that Jesus' teaching regulated them. Only, Jesus teaches not only to do deeds of benevolence, but to do them in the liberty of love, and to live without care; not only to pray and to fast, but so to fast and pray as to honour God and draw down His blessing on the worshipper. If He seems to make the negative element in morality even more prominent than before, that is due to His superior earnestness.

For every earnest teacher of the masses of mankind must speak little of wealth as a possible means of great heroism, which it rarely becomes, and much of wealth as a terrible temptation, which it never fails to be; and what is true of wealth is true of every other mundane source of happiness. It remains uncertain, however, whether Jesus thoroughly committed Himself to approval of the comparatively mechanical practice of fasting. In the passage already cited, He takes for granted that His disciples will pray, fast, and give alms, and tells them how to pray, give, and fast. And, though He speaks of a time when His disciples "will fast" (Matt. ix. 15 and parallels), the phrase occurs in a lyrical outburst of sadness at the thought of His own approaching death; it is poetry rather than prose; and our natural supposition, that the fasting temper will express itself in the rite of fasting, is modified by Christ's immediately following words (vers. 16, 17).[1]

This character of Christ's teaching, as being given to His own time in its own familiar speech, blunts at once the edge of the objection, that Christ's morality is ill-developed and incomplete. It is not the function of a religious revealer to enunciate a system of philosophy, or apocalyptically, like a heathen Sibyl, to speak to distant ages. "The more detailed is the programme of a reformation in the life of the spirit, so much the narrower is its scope; the more indefinite it is in detail, so much the further and longer does it operate."[2]

(4) The last time condition of Christ's teaching is to be found in the uniqueness of His own vocation. No other son of man was ever called to be the world's

[1] See below, ch. vi., p. 121.

[2] Ritschl, *Justification*, iii., 359.

Saviour, and the founder of the kingdom of God. But this calling, because it was above all, excluded all ordinary ethical duties of society;[1] it excluded the possession of a home, and the duty of working for bread. After the opening of His public ministry Jesus did not labour. Nor was his life-work regulated by any general social conditions; it was not organic to any of the ordinary realisations of God's purpose on earth; it was purely exceptional. Now, it was inevitable that this exceptional character should attach not only to Christ, but to Christ's immediate followers. Before the Resurrection Christianity seems a different thing from what, in subsequent history, it has shown itself to be. Men are called to leave everything for Christ's sake; very soon the apostles are found bidding their converts abide in that station in which conversion found them (compare, as examples, Luke xiv. 33 with 1 Cor. vii. 20). It seems at first as if Christ made it a necessity for salvation, to follow Him on His evangelising tours; but we cease to be misled when we find that, in definite cases, when His new-found disciple was not selected for training or for office, and when he belonged to a region that had not already heard Christ's gospel, Christ was capable of checking the burning zeal of personal devotion, and of sending His convert home (Mark v. 19 and Luke viii. 39).

Thus it appears that the temper, which would hold Christianity to the bare letter of its first form, is unreligious. "Imitation" of Christ is unchristian; it is possible only for those who have failed to perceive what Christ is,—that His is a calling no Christian can

[1] *Ib.*, p. 389.

or dare imitate; and that Jesus is not come to destroy the world's order, but to deny it in His own person, in order thereby, in the lives of His disciples, to redeem it and consecrate it to the glory of God.

We have now finished our review of Christ's ethical teaching.

It may strike us that, in spite of the novelty of His revelations, the doctrines He teaches do not depend for acceptance on His personal authority. It is new, strange, unearthly to be bidden forgive our enemies; but once the new truth is launched, we cannot doubt that it belongs to the law of duty; our conscience bears it this witness. And, of course, Christian life and virtue are the human ideal; but the ideal has been developed by the aid of Christ; and we cannot prove that its conception could have been reached without Him. How can we distinguish what is natural from what is supernatural in ethic? We have grown up in the very atmosphere of Christianity; centuries of acquiescence, generations of belief, are in our blood. And, even if Christian ethic could be stated as a self-evidencing philosophy, it would be binding on us, not as a philosophy, but as the law of a redeemed life.

At the same time we must insist on the essential importance of all that is newest in Christ's ethical teaching. Self-sacrifice is the open secret of the moral life. The cross is not only the emblem of infinite purity and boundless love, but the type of willingly accepted suffering. In the struggle after righteousness the half is harder than the whole. What the Law could not do, God has done by the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus. And this, not only in Christ's

doctrine, but in His person and life. For His doctrine and His person imply each other. He illustrated all that He preached. He is the revealer of a kingdom of righteousness, because He not only taught but lived all the novel virtues of the new faith. He is thus the great exemplar of patience, resignation, humility, propitiatoriness, cross-bearing. We refuse to require in the New Testament a detailed programme of spiritual reform; but we equally refuse to underrate the glimpses of final and perfect truth which Christ permits from time to time. If, indeed, Christ's teaching could be antiquated, Christianity must die. If a higher or wiser teaching than His could be discovered, if a better example could be pointed out, if an influence could be found which might even be compared with His in persuasive moral force,—then we might fear for Christianity; but we do not fear for it.

From this character of maturity and power, Christian ethic makes good the claim of Christ not only on Jews but on all mankind. There are other moral teachers besides Christ, but none better than the Law and the Prophets. If these needed fulfilment by Christ, much more do the unconscious prophecies of the world's cravings and aspirations. Even those who profess contentment with other masters, may confess the lack of four things promised in Christ. He verifies the moral view of life as compared with the materialist. When "their light is low," Christians look away to the victorious submission of Christ's death, and believe. Secondly, Christ completes the range of duty by revealing the forgotten Father, forgotten through our sin; by making God known brings God glory, and thus brings true salvation to men. But duty which does not in-

clude duty towards God surely has the nature of sin in it. Thirdly, Christ, while revealing the highest peaks of virtue, gives us a new impulse to enable us to scale them; and, finally, He reckons with the consequences of our failure in duty by atoning for sin. In other words, Christ reveals the ideal life for man, God's wandering child, in such a way as to commend it to sinners and to enforce it on them. Christianity is neither a natural nor an unnatural religion. It enables men to reach their proper ideal in such a way as, by God's grace, remains open for sinners. But "redemption from sin" does not explain Christianity, unless we can say to what life we are redeemed; nor does the fact that our piety springs out of a prolonged repentance measure down the gospel to a merely remedial scheme. There is truth as well as error in the frequent protest against a negative creed; and the truth is of great importance. If Christianity is so stated as to seem a Divine anomaly, a mere episode in the history of the universe, our apologetic will tremble, if it does not fall, under the attacks of scepticism. What is conventional, however noble or venerable, passes away. What is, in a high sense, natural, what is organically bound up with the whole moral world, what has its value in itself, alone is permanent.

The doctrine in which this view of Christianity first meets us is the doctrine of the sinlessness of Jesus. It is a claim of sinlessness, or rather of perfectly achieved vocation, which we make on behalf of Christ. Sinlessness denotes the unchallengeable holiness, the uniqueness, of Christ; it sums up His ethical claims, if indeed, only His ethical claims, upon mankind. The priority of the internal evidence for the gospel does not

lead us away from miracle, but puts miracle on a new footing which commends it with new force. For there are miracles and miracles, just as there are orders of nature and orders of nature mixed up in our cosmos. The theory of uniformity, usually used by contemporary science, is drawn from that law of causality which applies directly to the fragmentary aspect of the universe investigated by the sciences of the inorganic, which applies less perfectly and less exhaustively to the phenomena of life, and not at all, or only by analogy, to character. Hence *à priori* there may be no probability of a physical miracle, while a moral miracle may both possess a native probability of its own and lend probability to others. The imagination of a sinful Jesus may please those sceptics or weak would-be Christians, who must, above all things, save the regularity of the phenomena of the time-and-space world; but a sinful Jesus would mean that the main-spring of the moral universe was broken. Not thus—vainly, or contradicted by His own life—did Jesus Christ teach.

CHAPTER VI

CHRIST'S TEACHING IN RELATION TO THE CEREMONIAL LAW.

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WE have already discussed most of the materials of this chapter. We have decided that Christ personally observed the ceremonial law; we have seen that His ethical teaching reduced all ceremonial elements to a position of indifference; we have even, in discussing Christ's criticism of the Pharisees, examined most of the passages in which our Lord gives explicit teaching regarding the ceremonial law. Nevertheless, for the sake of clearness and completeness, it will be needful briefly to discuss the subject here. If we be asked what we mean by ceremony, or what right we have to group different topics under that common head, it may be answered that a ceremony is a non-spiritual religious obligation. In Jesus' own view, all things which come under this head are on one footing. As in conduct, so in teaching, Christ habitually allowed the authority of the ceremonial law; but He was prepared for its abrogation; and, when occasion offered, He plainly indicated that it was secondary in value, and therefore destined to pass away.

First of all, we may refer to the cleansing or

cleansings of the temple (Matt. xxi. 12 and parallels; also John ii. 13). These, to a remarkable degree, apart from whatever significance they may have in the lifework of Jesus, indicate the reverence He paid to ceremonial worship. The synagogue was the providentially provided home for moral piety, a sphere for evangelising work by Jesus and His apostles; the temple was the centre of ritual worship; it was an outrage upon the solemnities of the Divine ritual that moved Jesus to bitter practical rebuke. This must have been His impulse, even if He had further in view to vindicate the rights of the Gentiles (Weiss, Holtzmann, from Mark. xi. 17). To suppose that a temple could exist without sacrifice is absurd, though Jesus may well have attached less value to sacrifice than to prayer. Both at this time and earlier (Luke ii. 49) He called the temple "His Father's house."

A second indication of Jesus' regard for ritual, as part of the Divine law then in force over Israel, is found in His respect for the ordinances of the law regarding the cleansing of lepers (Matt. viii. 2 and parallels; Luke xvii. 12). No such provision existed for the cleansing of demoniacs; possession, whatever it may have been,—and it was the most usual occasion for Jesus' healing,—had no existence for the Old Testament Law. But on both the occasions when, so far as recorded, Jesus healed lepers,—there may have been many more (cf. Matt. xi. 5 and Luke vii. 22),—He sent the men cured, though under different circumstances, to do their ceremonial duty.

e are not bound to think that the "testimony" He counted on (Matt. viii. 4) was our Lord's only motive

for this course; the less, as the command in Luke xvii. says nothing about such a ground.[1]

It has been said, indeed (Holtzmann), that even to touch lepers was illegal. But Jesus' was a healing touch. Leprosy did not soil His cleanness; He cleansed the leper's foulness. Obviously the Law did not cover such a case, though Jesus' conduct might shock precisians. Another point is raised by Holtzmann in admitting (to Ritschl, Weizsäcker, Keim, Schenkel) that, at a subsequent time, when the woman with the issue of blood was healed, we do not hear that she was sent to the priests. The suggestion is, that Jesus had grown bolder. Such an argument *e silentio* is, however, always precarious.

Another indication of Jesus' recognition of the ceremonial law is found Matt. xvii. 27, in a passage immediately to be discussed. Here, however, as we shall see, His judgment as to ceremonies is explicitly stated; and accordingly, when He orders obedience to ceremony, the motive of His conduct shows beneath the deed. He orders payment of the temple dues, "lest we cause them to stumble;" but, none the less, He orders payment.

Finally, Jesus explicitly acknowledges the duty to be even nice in ceremonies; the verse is found in that great discourse, which the first Gospel places as His final summing up against the Pharisees (xxiii. 23). His indignation was roused, not only by their immorality, but by the accompanying pedantry of their religious punctilio. They "left undone the

[1] Godet takes the "testimony" to be, Testimony that I respect the Law and prophets. Weiss washes it down to, Official evidence for the public that you are cured.

weightier matters of the Law, judgment and mercy and faith," while they "tithed mint and anise and cummin;" the moral duties, the weightier duties, exclaims Jesus, they ought to have done! But lest there should be misapprehension on the part of His hearers, He checks the flow of His moral indignation, slipping in a lowly practical *caveat.* Wrong in exaggerating the value of punctilio, the Pharisees were right in not omitting to tithe their herbs; for conscientiousness, which appears as the dead fossil of self-righteousness in the self-righteous, shows itself in good men to be the living root of all their goodness. In saying what He did, our Lord thus acknowledged that ceremonies, however abused, were binding on men's consciences.

Luke, indeed, in the parallel passage, prefixes to this verse a maxim hardly to be reconciled with it: "Give for alms those things which ye can; and, behold, all things are clean unto you" (xi. 41). This version of Matt. xxiii. 26 can hardly, however, compete with the form given in the first Gospel. Our revisers, translating, "Give for alms those things which are within," make the parallelism[1] closer; but it is more than probable that the change in the shade of meaning, manifest in the unguarded injunction of the last clause, so characteristic of the remoter distance from the Law at which Luke wrote, extended also to the first clause, and interpreted that clause in

[1] Meyer and Godet take the words to mean, "Give your food in alms," and prefer Luke's text, without noticing the parallelism of vers. 39, 41, or the difficulty of the final clause of ver. 41. Weiss criticises Luke's version much as is done above.

the sense of the third Gospel's favourite praise of almsgiving and habitual condemnation of wealth (xii. 33, vi. 20-24).

Having now decided that Christ confirmed for the time the practical duty of keeping the ceremonial law, we proceed to study that part of His teaching which indicates His inward indifference to it, and His foretelling or foreordaining a time when it should cease to prevail.

First of all, as we began the last head by referring to Jesus' cleansing of the temple, so we may begin this head by referring to a passage [1] that has often been used to prove Christ's superiority to ceremonialism; I mean His prophecy of the destruction of the temple (Matt. xxiv. 2 and parallels). The act of cleansing the temple proved that Jesus regarded its worship as holy and Divine. His prediction of its destruction proves that He felt that the religious spirit He was bringing into the world was not bound to that order in the midst of which it began life; it proves that He was able to value the temple cult, while free from any bondage to ceremonialism. The loss of the holy place had been the sorest and most staggering blow to the piety of the Old Testament; but Jesus, while He looks forward to the coming catastrophe with the tenderest feelings of a patriot and of a shepherd of souls (Matt. xxiii. 37 and Luke xiii. 34, also xix. 41), nowhere hints that the future blow will touch His kingdom, nowhere feels it necessary to explain that the future blow will not touch His kingdom. In a private conversation Jesus had

[1] Weiss, *New Test. Theol.*, § 24.

even earlier given a similar prediction (John iv. 21), and spoken of its effect[1] in the spiritualizing of worship.

Secondly, we may refer to Christ's summaries of the Law. These have already been quoted and commented on in ch. ii. What strikes us in them is the fact, that the ceremonial element in the Law is entirely ignored. From the central principle of love, or from that of the Golden Rule, it is plain that all possible moral duties may be deduced. But it is equally plain that duties of ceremonial purity or of ritual assiduity stand in no direct relation with love or unselfishness. No one, who viewed those duties as an essential part of religion, could have defined religion as Jesus did; no one who reckoned on the permanence of such "beggarly rudiments" would have been so boldly superhistorical as Jesus was in His reproduction of the principle of a historical religion like that of the Old Testament. Plainly, we may repeat, Levitism was for Him an easily forgotten accident.

Another indication of Jesus' relation towards the ceremonial law is found in the twice quoted prophetic principle, that mercy is better than sacrifice (Hosea vi. 6; Matt. ix. 13, xii. 7). In this Jesus is true to the precedent of the prophets; but He disregards the precedent of ceremonialism in adjudging to ceremony a place morally, and therefore intrinsically, and therefore permanently, lower than that of genuine goodness. It might of course be urged that the enunciation of this principle by Jesus need no more abolish or preclude ceremony than its enunciation by the prophets. But this ignores the difference between Jesus and even the

[1] See below, p. 127.

greatest prophet. Is it not a frequent incident of progress, that, without the discovery of new truth, old truths receive a new and potent life when the electric moment comes? This quotation by itself might mean little; on Jesus' lips, holding its own place among His sayings, such a quotation means much.

A fourth point, not unworthy of notice, is, that in Jesus' own teaching ceremonies have no place. He refers, indeed, to the actual order of society; "if thou art offering thy gift at the altar" (Matt. v. 23); "when thou doest alms" (vi. 2); "when ye fast" (vi. 16); "pray ye that your flight be not on a Sabbath" (xxiv. 20). But His own commandments move in a different sphere. What that sphere was, and how different, every reader may easily see for himself; we have sufficiently explored it for our purposes in the last chapter.

Finally, we have to consider a short series[1] of passages in which Jesus expressly indicates His attitude towards the Old Testament ceremonies. In all these cases His teaching is occasional. He did not make or seek occasion to disclaim "the bond written in ordinances;" He did not systematically expound its limitations; His teaching was more living, more practical, more peaceable. But, when occasions came, He was prepared to use them.

The first passage to be quoted is found in all three Synoptic Gospels (Matt. ix. 14 and parallels). A question was put to Jesus, as Mark correctly[2] records, by

[1] Matt. xii. 8 has already been removed for us from this category. Above, ch. iv., p. 65, *sq.*

[2] Beyschlag (*Halle Osterprogramm*, 1875) observes that John's disciples could not be conceived as themselves putting the question, Why do we fast?

some one in the multitude, with a view to two classes of religionists. "Why do John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but Thy disciples fast not?" Jesus was thrown into a profound lyrical sadness. We do not know at what date this conversation occurred; but we can see that the question suggested to Jesus His impending death[1] and the necessary parting from His disciples. They were now like wedding guests; they were glad in His fellowship; but a day of parting was to come; then they would sorrow; then they must fast. It is plain, as has already[2] been said, that these words are not to be taken with dull literalness; they are words of the heart, not coinage of the intellect. Recovering Himself, Jesus at once set Himself in earnest to answer the question put to Him. But He preferred, as His manner was, to insinuate the new truth in the guise of parable. Parables, it is generally[3] recognised, were used to teach the mysteries of the kingdom, in order both to repel the careless, and to give instruction, in impressive forms, to those who cared to lift the thin veil thrown over the truth. In the present case, Jesus was uttering a truth which, put in plain words, would have provoked a storm of controversy,—a truth, whose realisation Jesus was content to commit to time. The parables used may offend the careless, but they cannot do them wrong, while they fall like seeds into the hearts of the disciples; by-and-bye

[1] The sad cast of our Lord's words seems to assure us that death, and not (as Beyschlag) an undefined departure, was in view.

[2] Above, ch. v., p. 106.

[3] Trench, *Notes*, Introduction, ii; Plumptre, in Smith's *Bible Dictionary*.

they will bear fruit. Two parables, or, according to Luke, three, were spoken. All turn on the contrast of old and new; old bottles, new wine; old dress, new patch; old wine, new wine. But what is the interpretation of the old, and what of the new? If Jesus' gospel is the good old wine, what is the new wine that bursts old bottles? Or, if Jesus' gospel be the new wine of gladness, are there any bottles in which it is not to be stored,—any men or classes of men to whom it is wrong to offer the gospel? Earlier interpretations were too apt, as usual, to clear the difficulties of the passage at a flying leap. Among recent interpreters Holtzmann (after Schenkel, Lüdemann) supposes that Jesus is charging John and the Pharisees with patching with ascetic novelties the old garment of the Law, which knew only of one fast, on the yearly Day of Atonement. For His own part, Jesus disclaims patchwork. It is objected to this interpretation, that fasting is distinctively an old fashion, however freshly developed; further, that Jesus could not speak of the action of His contemporaries as being what "no man does." Weiss holds that, in all three parables, Jesus is apologising for the backwardness of John's disciples, looking on it as a stranger fact than the comparative maturity of His own. John's disciples were men with old bottles, who were shy of the new wine of gladness; men with old garments, who feared to adulterate their staid religious temper with any unsuitable novelties; men who, like connoisseurs in wine,[1] knew that the old was good, the old ascetic religion, and were naturally reluctant to travel further, only, it might be, to fare

[1] The third parable, preserved only in Luke, brings out the reference to John's disciples.

worse. Beyschlag holds that Weiss is right in regard to the first and last parables; in them Jesus is apologising for the backwardness of John's disciples; but in the second Beyschlag holds that our Lord is defending Himself for omitting to teach His disciples to fast, and is hinting that new spiritual experiences need new forms. This lesson is found in the passage by many interpreters (so Holtzmann also, and those he quotes). In any case Jesus speaks of a contrast, and must mean to contrast the spirit of fasting with the spirit of His religion. Fasting, then, is no essential part of Christianity.

The second passage we have to deal with is found in Matthew and Mark, but omitted by Luke. It is the often-quoted story of the Jerusalem Pharisees, who asked (Matt. xv. 2) why Jesus' disciples "transgressed the elders' tradition." This provoked Jesus to a bitter exposure[1] of the transgressions of God's law sanctioned by Pharisaism, and to making a statement for the benefit of the disciples, within hearing of the Pharisees, of one of those moral principles to which His whole life witnessed: "Not that which entereth into the mouth defileth the man, but that which proceedeth out of the mouth, this defileth the man." A simple parable, if[2] a parable at all,—a vivid pictorial statement which did not elude even the Pharisee's shallowness,—this was too hard for the disciples. In answer to a request of Peter's, they received an explanation (ver. 16, *sq.*)

[1] Above, ch. iii., pp. 44, 49.

[2] Weiss refers it to physical pollutions in the ceremonial law. It seems difficult to hold that unclean meats, even if not technically a defilement, could be said "not to defile" when the Law forbad them; and Weiss's attempt to show that Jesus was supporting the Levitical law is a mere evasion. Holtz-

which it was impossible to mistake; but, in pity, perhaps, for their weakness, Jesus only affirmed, that "to eat with unwashen hands defileth not the man." Nevertheless, "this He said," adds Mark, "making all meats clean." And we did not need the Evangelist's assurance that such was the purport of Christ's teaching. Were the Pharisees "offended when they heard this saying"? No wonder! It was a deadly blow not only for Talmudism but for Levitism,—a watchword for the undying battle between Jesus with His following and the Pharisees with their following,—a setting aside of everything for which Pharisees cared to live. And, bitterest thought, it was a death blow aimed, not by means of personal authority or prudential arguments, but by simple moral considerations, whose truth, once they were stated by the Christ, could never be eclipsed, but must continue to beam more and more brightly, to the great distaste of all that loved twilight.

The third and last of this group of passages is found in one Gospel only, Matt. xvii. 24-27. So strange a narrative, supported by only one witness, seeming to point to so unusual a claim on the part of Jesus, reciting so singular a miracle,[1] would hardly command our belief, if it were not supported by analogies elsewhere.

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mann approves of Weiss's explanation of the parable; but instead of finding an endorsement of the Law, he continues to find in the passage the foreshadowing of the abolition of ceremony, just as most interpreters have done.

[1] Holtzmann is bound to exclude miracle; he boldly affirms that the phrase is no more literal than "fishers of men" (*Protestantenbibel*, after Paulus). Weiss calls this "unmeaning torture" of the passage, but hints at a misunderstanding of Christ's word and of the event (after Hase). Meyer says bluntly, "The miracle remains, . . . and its difficulties too."

On a closer view, however, the appearance of strangeness vanishes in great measure, and we find that Jesus' claim is analogous to His usual teaching, and His action to His usual conduct.

The temple shekel in question might perhaps be regarded rather as a traditional exaction than as a legal due. The Rabbis, it is true, based this yearly tribute on the poll tax of Exod. xxx. 13; but there is no proof that that tax was meant to be repeated, and none that it was meant to be annual. Perhaps this very ambiguity in the nature of the tax helps to explain Jesus' conduct. Tradition He disowned; law He kept; yet His spirit was destined to put both law and tradition out of currency. Was not this a favourable opportunity for indicating the true bearing of His spirit on such external exactions? Children are free, —children,[1] not the Christ only; and it does not become a child to let his zeal for pleasing men make him slavishly ready with accommodations to unchildlike disciplines. And yet it is best to give no offence. The exaction after all, whether rightly or wrongly, is based on God's word; it does not become the Christ to descend below the morals of exegesis and to wrangle over verbal niceties. Provision may therefore be made for Christ and His disciples in a strange way, divinely supernatural, and yet very humble; in this manner the conquests of the new spirit may involve less bitterness.

It is worthy of note how, in speaking privately to one of His disciples, our Lord drops the figurative veil, which He generally throws over the statement of

[1] See what is said above, ch. iv., p. 75.

practical changes to come. He plainly announces that the spirit of His kingdom is one of sonship, of freedom, of lordship. And He Himself indicates the inference, that many obligations, though fit for older dispensations, even though still to be suffered for a season, are intrinsically unworthy[1] of those whom the Son makes free.

It is remarkable how Jesus prepares for the abrogation of ceremonies; not by authority, but by nature and reason. He sometimes looks to the new source of joy He is destined to implant in mankind; sometimes He trusts in the freedom, the child's temper, which His people shall inherit; never is the motive for abrogating ceremony other than a moral and religious principle. To dispel darkness, to illuminate what is obscure, the simplest means is to bring in light. And it is a feature of all reforms, that the moral principle on which they proceed is the moving force in their execution, working directly, without detailed reckoning of obstacles or qualifying circumstances. The more neutral historical view of reforms comes later, with its reflection, that the right was not theirs only, and that they were not purely right; or that, if they were happy enough to be unsullied by baseness, they yet owed their success, not alone to their intrinsic justice, but to the favour of circumstance and to fitness of occasion. That reflection comes later; moral progress, for the moment, is im-

[1] Similar teaching is given, also in private, John iv. 24. That case, however, is peculiar, in referring not to a Christian principle, but to a principle of Old Testament revelation (Weiss, *Joh. Lehrbegriff*, pp. 54, 55), in order to base on it a Christian inference. Its parallel is Matt. xix. 8 (see above, ch. v., p. 104).

patient of the past; it can see only wickedness to be inverted, foolishness to be removed. Exactly opposite is legal progress, familiar in the politics of modern society, and represented in Jesus' time by the system of the scribes. Even in changing it affects to follow precedent, and slavishly clothes the new life it cannot exclude with the garb of former days. Religious progress, in a sense, combines the features of both kinds of progress. It never forgets its past; it never ignores the present. Jesus knew that He was not come to destroy the Law and the Prophets; He knew that He was come to fulfil them.

Yet even religion must have its moral changes and reforms of practice. And, in the practical sphere, even religion is dependent on the naked force of moral motives, which have grown self-conscious. The abrogation of Jewish ceremonies dates from the time when Jesus intimated that they were unchildlike, unjoyous, meaningless. It is later in the day that we find a more reflective but also a colder judgment of these ceremonies, in the light of history, as part of God's pedagogy and "a shadow of the good things to come." Just so, in the Reformation, the moving force was not a philosophical spirit of amendment, but burning scorn for idolatry and anger at the enslavement of the Church; hardly yet—so keen is the battle—are we in a position to perceive that Mediævalism had its part to play in the evolution of Christianity. Our Reform Bills are never carried by the calculations of Whig prudence, but by vague feelings as to liberty and popular rights. After the event men begin to see that, whatever the rights of men, education is needed before power can be well employed, and that hitherto liberty herself must needs have borne

delay. Toleration is established on grounds of universal spiritual authority; it is accepted—at least they say so—by men who have the intolerance of the Old Testament staring them in the face, and who revere the Old Testament even to excess; reflection begins to mediate later on; we are beginning to see that even so fundamental a piece of religious common-sense as toleration must necessarily be late in appearing. Free Trade did not enter the world as a device suited to the time, but as a sort of economic revelation or political gospel; perhaps at last our economists begin to guess that universal competition is not the highest social ideal. Even a Von Bismarck, to achieve the first of his astute schemes of national selfishness, must use that idea of race which he has often repressed and always despised. The most cynical apostle of materialism, with a continent at his feet, would be powerless, if moral forces were not enlisted among his vast armies.

But does this parallel with other movements reduce the Christian reform to their level? Or is Christ's place merely that of the suggester of moral considerations? Is His connection with Christian spiritualism accidental and passing? On the contrary; the personality of Christ dominates Christianity. His deep *I say unto you* is heard in every Christian principle, imparting an indescribable but vital qualification. All we have pointed out is, that for one end—the end of a practical reformation—He uses the appropriate means, statement of moral truth.

We must remember that a moral consciousness is growing in mankind. Normal perceptions of duty are so far from being written on every heart, from the first, that they are learned slowly through many an error. Or,

if they are written on the heart, they are written in invisible ink, and only developed by the reaction of life, with help from the moral leaders of mankind. But, once a duty is discovered *and acted on*, conscience owns it; to do right, as now understood, henceforward seems natural. Not a mere stock of opinions, but a moral nature, is in course of growth. Nay, in this way diseased developments are possible. There are numberless false starts on the moral racecourse. Every erroneous public opinion propagates bastard moral intuitions, teaching men to sin with a clear conscience, or to do right hesitatingly, with a heavy heart. Still, in the long run, progress is certain to an honest conscience, or an earnest community. False beliefs are in disaccord with facts. They are sloughed off, while truths are confirmed. Now, the growth of a moral nature may lead to concealment of its origin and history. When right seems natural, we forget to ask who first taught us the great lesson. The moral universe is revealed in Christ; but, while living in it, we may set fictitious boundaries to it, and deny the claims of its discoverer. Revelation, indeed, is scarcely the affirmation of new and unheard-of truths,—how could such things be received into the life of reason? It is rather the confirmation of the heart's doubting moral deliverances, the shaping out and interpreting of what was vague or rudimentary, the cleansing of religious life from the disease of sin. But faith is the necessary complement to duty. The moral universe must not be mutilated. And faith can survive the storms of the world only in dependence on its rightful Lord, in the form of faith in Christ.

Only one objection occurs to me, which could evade

the force of Jesus' words about ceremony, as we have been led to interpret them. It may be said that He favoured some repeal, but not a total repeal. And, no doubt, it is open to anyone to hold that Jesus disbelieved in distinction of meats, but wished to retain tithes. But the theory will not escape grave difficulties. The freedom which He ascribed to God's children, the lordship of the Sabbath which He (perhaps) taught them, the moral grounds on which His whole teaching rested, the connection of all with His absolute revelation of goodness, make it strangely unlikely that He rested in any such compromise. So pure and spiritual a message as His claims to be interpreted from the centre outwards. Jesus' teaching needs no other clue, than is given by the resolution, to establish an order worthy of God's kingdom, and to do this without violent change, by a quiet and gentle growth.

A fact, which might seem to support the hypothesis just canvassed, is strongly emphasised by Ritschl,—that Jesus nowhere foretells the abrogation of circumcision. He would infer from this, that Jesus looked forward to a society[1] in which Jews should have the first rank, while Gentiles should be admitted to a secondary place, and the Jewish law in general abrogated. But the fact on which he builds is ambiguous. For Jesus taught on such themes only as occasion offered; and, living, as He did, among Jews, and ministering only to Jews, He could meet with no occasion for discussing the ethical value or valuelessness of circumcision. He may have omitted it as a single detail, thinking He taught sufficiently in laying down the general principles of His revelation, and in passing judgment on the points of

[1] *A. K. Kirche*, 34, 125.

principle regarding ritual.[1] I say this, remembering the abstract possibility that, if Israel had been converted, the Kingdom of God might have had Jewish features, which the world is never to see in it. There is another necessary admission which it would be well to bear in mind. Though we, for our part, understand circumcision as superseded by the implications of Jesus' teaching, His silence regarding it may have had important bearings on the growth of parties in the early Christian Church.

Christ then, while He not only respected the ceremonial law but was zealous for its honour, looked calmly forward to the destruction of its centre in the temple, and omitted ceremony from His positive injunction, while in such diverse points as fasting, distinctions of meat, and temple dues, He indicated its incongruence with the spirit of His Kingdom.[2]

[1] Reuss, quoted by Prof. Bruce, calls our Lord's silence "significant."—*Interpreter* for December, 1884.

[2] Compare Appendix D., The Question of the Law in the Early Church.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST'S TEACHING IN ITS RELATION TO THE LAW CONSIDERED AS STATUTE LAW.

CHAPTER VII.

CHRIST'S TEACHING IN ITS RELATION TO THE LAW CONSIDERED AS STATUTE LAW.

OUR title requires a word of apology. For we shall have to prove, that Christ's teaching, so far as words go, stands in no explicit relation to the statute law of the Old Covenant,—that Jesus refused to be drawn into the sphere of politics. But this very fact is important. The comparison of Christ's political abstinence with Old Testament practice is instructive; it throws a strong light on the moral centre of Christ's teaching; it gains itself in depth of meaning when illustrated by those moralities which Christ's life and words alike revealed.

The first indication of Christ's attitude towards political questions is afforded us in the narrative of His temptation,[1]—not, it is true, in Mark's outline, but in the fuller details of Matthew and Luke. The culminating trial of our Lord's faithfulness, according to the first Gospel and according to internal probability, was the temptation to acquiesce in the current expectations of the Messiah, so far as to choose—whatever spiritual price it might cost—a worldly kingdom, and to do His merciful work from the ideal loftiness of David's throne. But Jesus repelled this from Him as a compromise of

[1] Good remarks in *Ecce Homo*, ch. ii.

the duties of His vocation, a bargain with Satan, a snare of the arch enemy. We can readily understand that, at the entrance to His ministry, Jesus must decide, even by means of the anguish of temptation, what form His lifework should take. We can readily understand, that the miraculous endowment, which He never used before, but which He used unrestingly hereafter, should, as Mr. Seeley has pointed out, have lent weight to the plausible suggestion, that supernatural force should be employed to establish a political Kingdom of God. And such a kingdom could have done much; it is one of the most attractive, one of the most tantalizing visions of prophecy; yet it could not have done what Christ had come to do. Hence we can well believe that Jesus, strong in perfect faithfulness and insight, rose superior to that temptation then and always. The rest of His life is the record of His loyalty to the supernatural purpose which had been tried with fire.

It is the fourth Gospel which records the occasion on which temptation returned to Jesus from the actions of men (John vi. 15; cf. Matt. xiv. 13 and parallels; also xvi. 23, and Mark viii. 33). The Galilean crisis of His ministry, obscurely visible in the Synoptic Gospels, is here tragically plain. The people were aroused to enthusiasm by His words and signs, but their enthusiasm took the base form of trying to thrust on Him a *rôle*, which, for Him, would have been an indignity. He escaped from the "force" that would have "made Him king" by "straightway constraining" His disciples to depart, and by Himself withdrawing into the mountain alone. Soon this popularity waned. Disappointed, it could only make its victims ready to look

on with languid acquiescence during the rejection and murder of the misunderstood Christ; but Jesus had been perfectly faithful to His ideals; and all that befel Him, in consequence of His faithfulness, came to Him in the path of His calling, by permission of God's providence, and so tended to His perfecting in the work of our salvation.

Three special narratives are found in the Gospels, illustrating Jesus' attitude towards political questions. The chief of these is recorded in all three synoptics (Matt. xxii. 15 and parallels). It relates a conversation between Jesus and some emissaries of the Pharisees, at the time, towards the end of our Lord's life, when His enemies were anxiously seeking to gather materials for a telling charge against Him. On this occasion their question was skilfully enough framed for their ends. Was it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? Practical common-sense forbade disobedience; refusal of tribute meant hopeless rebellion. But did not theory demand it? Was it consistent with the Old Testament national theocracy to acknowledge the foreign tyrant, and to acquiesce in the continued degradation of the chosen people? If Jesus refused to sanction the payment of tribute He could be denounced to Pilate as a rebel; if He sanctioned it, the people would readily believe that He was no prophet.

It was thus our Lord's interest to evade the question; and although He answered it, He did so indirectly. He used the wise man's right, in this instance, of refusing to be put to the question by prying malice. Nor was the question really so important, or so honest, as it at first sight seemed. Jesus was come to put out of currency those ethnic conditions of religion, which made

it seem sinful, as well as unpatriotic, to pay taxes to the foreigner; it was unnecessary to treat with respect that —so to say—Irish patriotism, which hungrily enough swallowed all benefits of the alien rule, and objected only to paying for them. It was reasonable to evade the question. But it was more than permissible; it was, in the highest sense, needful for Jesus to do so. He must at all costs escape sinking from a religious authority into a partizan. His work was not to alter external conditions of life, but to set free the spirit and to save from sin. So He asked for a denarius, the coin paid in the tax, and inquired whose was the head stamped upon it. When they answered *Cæsar's*, they must surely have felt reminded that this image of Cæsar was the type of an authority over the national life, which could not be escaped by any whimsical theory as to the lawfulness of paying or duty to refuse payment; they must have felt reminded of the long Divine punishment which had stifled their political freedom, and which soon was to bring the national life to an end. But Jesus was not done with them. When they had given their helpless answer, *Cæsar's*, He rejoined: "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's." If you take Cæsar's coin, He in effect said, you must pay it too. That is your duty. But it is a different duty to which I am come to bear witness. Coin bears the stamp of the emperor's mint; all the world bears the stamp of God's creation. Render, then, God's gifts to God's glory, as the emperor's coin returns to his treasury; this also is part of your duty; this is the greater part of your duty; this, too,—not political reform, whatever that be worth,—is the thing to establish which I,

the Christ, am come into the world. In refusing the other task, I am not faithless but faithful to this.[1]

Thus our Lord had revealed the truth. It may be that, as a recent writer[2] on His life holds, this conversation proved a turning-point, after which Hosannas steadily yielded to execrations. Still, Jesus had been faithful to His mission. If His faithfulness only hurried on the end, He would yet be faithful, even to the end, and win a blessing. In the highest sense, success was His. Wisdom and holy love had not failed Him.

A second incident, very similar on a lesser scale, is recorded only in Luke's Gospel (xii. 13). One day our Lord's teaching was rudely interrupted. "Master," said the speaker, "bid my brother divide the inheritance with me." It was the speech of one whose soul had been wholly untouched by the words of the Master; it manifested the presence of a narrow, worldly mind, to whom the Kingdom of God and words of life were nothing in comparison with the importance of an inheritance. Jesus seems to have been wounded by the interruption, showing as it did that His solemn truths had fallen vainly on at least one soul; but His first words, before uttering any rebuke, were a quiet dis-

[1] Substantially as in Meyer and, more nearly, Weiss. De Wette understands, Political matters have nothing to do with conscience; a holy service is what God asks. But Christ was asked, was it a religious act or sinful to pay tribute, and He implied that it was a duty,—not a secularity with no religious colour. The vulgar view is De Wette's more coarsely: Keep sacred and secular things separate. But this is still worse. *Cæsar*, *Cæsar's* must be understood strictly. Our religious slang is a modern growth.

[2] Weiss.

claimer of the power to do as He was asked. "Man, who made me a judge or a divider over you?" He would not be led into seeming to admit that He had the functions of a worldly king or judge; His life and teaching were on a higher plane than theirs.

But here, as before, Jesus found it right to do more than repel false ideas concerning Himself. Instead of giving a judgment as to rights of property, He pronounced judgment on the sin of covetousness. We indignantly refuse to be called covetous if we wish to secure our legal right by all honourable means; and the man who spoke may have been no miser or grasping extortioner. Nevertheless, judged from the standpoint of the Kingdom, he appeared as one who sought first, not the Kingdom, but worldly advantages. Thus Jesus' commendation of disinterestedness and rebuke of the sin of covetousness were given in faithfulness to His mission. He was no ruler or reformer, except as He was ruler and creator of God's righteous kingdom; but He never ceased to bear witness, as occasion offered, to the manifold truth of God.

The remaining narrative to be studied is certainly without authority in the text where it stands (John viii. 2). Its manner, however, is very like that of the synoptic memoirs; and it bears on its front, in a striking degree, the stamp of truth. We shall quote this remarkable story as it has been paraphrased and made luminous in the words of genius. "Some of the leading religious men of Jerusalem had detected a woman in adultery. It occurred to them that the case afforded a good opportunity of making an experiment upon Christ. . . . It might be possible, they thought, by means of this woman, to satisfy at once themselves and

the people of His heterodoxy. They brought the woman before Him, quoted the law of Moses on the subject of adultery, and asked Christ directly whether He agreed with the lawgiver. They asked for His judgment.

"A judgment He gave them; but quite different, both in matter and manner, from what they had expected. In thinking of the case, they had forgotten the woman, they had forgotten even the deed. . . . But the judgment of Christ was upon them, making all things seem new, and shining like the lightning from the one end of heaven to the other. He was standing, it would seem, in the centre of a circle when the crime was narrated, how the adultery had been detected *in the very act*. The shame of the deed itself, and the brazen hardness of the persecutors, the legality that had no justice, and did not even pretend to have mercy, the religious malice that could make its advantage out of the fall and ruin and ignominious death of a fellow creature—all this was eagerly and rudely thrust before His mind at once. The effect upon Him was such as might have been produced upon many since; but, perhaps, upon scarcely any man that ever lived before. He was seized with an intolerable sense of shame. He could not meet the eye of the crowd, or of the accusers, and, perhaps at that moment least of all, of the woman. Standing, as He did, in the midst of an eager multitude that did not in the least appreciate His feelings, He could not escape. In His burning embarrassment and confusion He stooped down, so as to hide His face, and began writing with His finger on the ground. His tormentors continued their clamour, until He raised His head for a moment, and said, 'He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone

at her;' and then instantly returned to His former attitude. They had a glimpse, perhaps, of the glowing blush upon His face, and awoke suddenly with astonishment to a new sense of their condition and their conduct. The older men naturally felt it first, and slunk away; the younger followed their example. The crowd dissolved, and left Christ alone with the woman. Not till then could He bear to stand upright; and when He had lifted Himself up, consistently with His principle, He dismissed the woman, as having no commission to interfere with the office of the civil judge.

"But the mighty power of living purity had done its work. He had refused to judge a woman; but He had judged a whole crowd. He had awakened the slumbering conscience in many hardened hearts, given them a new delicacy, a new ideal, a new view and reading of the Mosaic law."[1]

He had refused to judge a woman; but He had judged a whole crowd. He had refused to step down from His position as head of God's kingdom; He had escaped answering a question which He could hardly have decided with justice in either way; and He had once again revealed, to soiled and blinded consciences, the beauty and the inexorable severity of holiness.[2]

The position of some "historical" students of the Gospel would neutralise the results of our present examination. According to (*e.g.*) Holsten,[3] Jesus expected a miracle to erect a visible world-wide theocracy.

[1] *Ecce Homo*, ch. ix.

[2] Christ's decision regarding divorce is moral, not legislative. Above, ch. v., p. 104.

[3] *Zum Ev. des Paulus u. des Petrus.*

On this view, Jesus was Himself a cross between a Zealot and a Pharisee. On such a view, His moral greatness is destroyed, or it is held to have co-existed with accidental errors of the day. Even in looking forward to death Jesus is said to have retained this expectation; His prophecy of a Resurrection is identified with His prophecy of a Second Advent; and the essence of the kingdom of God, in Jesus' view, is supposed to have been a millenarian reign "in three days," *i.e.*, within a very short time after His death. We cannot attempt to determine with a passing word the eschatology of the New Testament. But we distinctly decline, upon such insolently conjectural grounds, to ignore the direct evidence of the narratives before us, or to set aside the words of Christ, or allow that His perfect moral wisdom was embedded in essentially erroneous fancies. Christ does not merely postpone vulgarly regal functions; nor does He ignore politics, like ritual, as being unimportant. His own language is, "Who made Me a judge or a divider over you?" He was distinctly conscious of giving a shock to the best thought of His age. What else is the meaning of His message to the Baptist? (Matt. xi. 6; Luke vii. 23). But He Himself was never shaken. To the end He was entitled to say, "My kingdom is not of this world; if My kingdom were of this world, then would My servants fight, that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now is My kingdom not from hence" (John xviii. 36).

At first sight, indeed, our Lord's attitude seems to favour the well-worn theory, that Christianity cuts life into two halves, secular and sacred. And, it is true, the separation of religious functions from "cosmical"

relations and conditions is a feat in which Christ appears profoundly original. Early civilization, for safety, for dear life, tied up religion with the state. Even the religion of Israel, while moral and supernatural, and tending to universalism, is natural in form so far as it is national. It, too, persecutes, not by accident, but inevitably; it, too, rests upon personal and political prosperity. Christ came, and—one might say—with a word changed all this. Rejected by the capital and by the rulers of His nation, He went to Galilee, and there, not waiting for the conversion or the help of the great, not regarding political omens, He erected the kingdom of God. Such a power could be neither advanced nor hindered by the world's action. It stood full-grown, full-armed, unconquerable, in the midst of the generation who had rejected Jesus, before the men who had made sure that, without their countenance, Jesus must fail.

It is true, several features in the history of Israel make such a religious attitude as that of Jesus less wholly novel and less revolutionary in Israel, than it would have been had the Christ appeared in any other race. That is only to say, that the Old Testament religion was, in its measure, a true preparation for Christ. Prophecy, a religious institution so alien to the augurships of heathenism, itself foreshadowed Christ's work. In prophecy religion appeared as a free self-development; it brought messages directly from God; it refused, even for the sake of the security of institutions, to be trammelled by institutions or even by traditions of its own, breaking away at need from the "schools of the prophets;" it played boldly and with mastery on the political institutions of its day.

But this is the limit of prophecy, that it works on the given conditions of religion, political and national. Even in its forecasts of the future it cannot disentangle itself from the instinctive expectation, that God will work to the end through the chosen nation and its polity. It was the mystery of ages, the secret hid from all generations, that an ethical community should be founded in the world, among its kingdoms, but not of them, indifferent to the props they lean on and to their mutual jealousies. Christ's surprise was prepared for, not only by prophecy, but by its cessation. The prophets, while they spoke, typified Christ; the people, when prophecy ceased, were driven inward for guidance to conscience and to prayer. Even the human school of the scribes was an anticipation of Christianity, in so far as the scribes obeyed reason and morality, and were faithful to Moses in leading the people. All these things silently prepared the way for Christ's act of emancipation. Similarly, while the loss of independence brought political development to an end, it called imperatively for religious development. It formally abolished those conditions on which Old Testament piety had counted. If religion was to live, it must take forms independent alike of the state and of the prophet; in the synagogue there arose a form of religious life which was parent to the Church; and, out of the pious individualisms of a broken age, Jesus Christ gathered the living materials for the perfect order of the kingdom of God. Once more, when the life of Israel flamed up again in its proper field of religion, and the half-forgotten voice of prophecy was heard from the lips of John the Baptist, this revival prepared the way for Christ; it taught men to listen, as their fathers had

done, to a living religious authority, which carried its own verification with it; and, in the nature of the case, it taught them to expect a salvation that was of the soul, and that did not bring, at least as its first or chief gift, political freedom (Luke i. 76, 77).

Christ's conduct, then, was not without its precedents. Yet these were precedents of fact rather than of intention; they hardly diminished the originality of Christ's thought; they hardly lessened the shock of His contemporaries' surprise. Circumstances did not tend to lead Jesus beyond the thought of the prophets, or teach Him to look on religion as not only free for itself, but complete in itself. Nothing traditional could suggest the hope, much less give the power, of establishing a kingdom of God among men, while political freedom was unachieved. Why did Christ separate Himself from Moses, that great religious leader, who, at the same time, was regarded as the founder of the whole social code of Israel? Why could not Jesus follow him, in both revealing God and dividing among men? Why did not Christ imitate Isaiah, who witnessed with power for God and righteousness, but who gained his ends by remonstrating with evil rulers, and by working upon the good? These men moved among the courts of the earth; centuries reverenced their smallest command; yet they were Jehovah's prophets; why will the perfect Prophet refuse the narrowest worldly functions? His vocation excludes worldly authority; He has risen above His forerunners; the internationalism of His ethic, the spirituality of His religion, the supernatural stamp of His whole life, make Him greater in His silence than they in all the influence to which God called them.

Nevertheless, one of the most constant features of Christian history has been the craving for a Theocracy. The early Church soon began to model itself after the Jewish Church. Mediæval thought in Western Europe recognised two catholic Theocracies,—that of the Holy Roman Empire in things civil, and that of the Holy Roman Church in things ecclesiastical.[1] And the Puritans, accommodating themselves to the new ideas of nationality, called upon every separate state to obey the inspired legislation of the Old and New Testaments, as it would be answerable. The earth was to be dotted over with Christian Israels. Thus persecution was as native to Puritanism as it still is to Roman Catholicism, —as native to both, as it ever was to the Old Testament religion. Can we judge these recurrent lapses as anything better than disloyalty to Christ? The modern spirit bases toleration, like private judgment, on inalienable individual rights; let us base both on the spirituality of the Christian religion, and on the priestly rights of believers, extending potentially, as they do, to all men.

In our own day and land we have to do with an aborted survival of Puritanism in the form of the Establishment Principle. Is this rag of Theocracy worth maintaining? Is it endurable that men should trick it out in the splendours of entirely obsolete opinions? The spirituality of Christ's work, the spirituality of Christianity, involve the spirituality of the Church; why should we reduplicate on ourselves by assigning properly spiritual functions to the state, and by deliberately creating a conflict of jurisdiction? The state cannot do the work of the Church. For example, it is

[1] Bryce, *Holy Roman Empire*, ch. vii.

not by accident that the Church is an international body; for she is witness to a supernatural life. But assuredly, we should do no good by running ahead of the moral development of the race, and substituting the International for the state!

There are three elements in the religious life of the individual. There is conduct; there are certain outward professions and rites performed in common; and there is the sphere of personal religion, when, in his inner chamber, with the door shut, the child of God prays to his Father in secret. Now, in the state, the last is amissing. The state has no personal religion; or rather, the personal religion of a land is that of its citizens. Our forefathers masked this fact of the case by talking of the duty and of the conscience of the "civil magistrate;"[1] but a democratic age makes plain, what was always true, that the religion of a country, to please God, must be the religion of its people. There remain then only two elements in national religion, conduct and profession; can we doubt which is of more importance? By all means, whether establishing or disestablishing churches, let us retain, in our national and public life, a seemly acknowledgment of God, even if, alas! it must be a formal acknowledgment. The usual proposal to give a tribunician veto to conscience,—to make it omnipotent for negation and impotent in its positive claims,—is an unhappy blunder. And we can allow seemly religious observance, without involving ourselves in the heartburnings and jealousy, or in the manifold dangers to religion, which attend on Church establishment. But do not let us think that seemly

[1] *Westminster Confession*, ch. xxiii.

forms of reverence will outweigh the smallest pandering to national selfishness or cowardice or greed. It is for our own sake, rather than for the sake of God, that forms are to be respected. Justice and mercy are better than sacrifice. On one side after another the question has been taken up, How shall we sanctify public life? From one side after another,—from Arnold, from Maurice, as well as from their keenest enemies,—comes the answer, "Ecclesiasticise it!" Even one, who has least sympathy with Carlyle's ugly and envenomed naturalism, may object to this sort of "shovel-hattery." The natural life is holy in itself, and does not need to be draped in sacerdotal vestments.

As Theocracy recurs, prophetism also recurs. But both are out of date. In the days of imperfect revelation, particular intuitions of God's will were of the greatest importance. When the moral world was not fully known, the duty of the day was a problem for God's oracles; he who could both receive and utter these was God's prophet. Intuitions of God's will continue, but they have lost their vicarious importance. They continue; for, in so far as Christians are led along the path of duty, they are led to the recognition of particular duties required by God's will. Duty in the abstract, duty in the general, is not duty at all. But these intuitions have lost their vicarious importance. All Christians may have them, and are called to attain them. In Christ we find the revelation of the moral universe as a universe. And, therefore, the perfect Prophet, from dependence on whom we can never wish to escape, is the last of the prophets.

Therefore, also, those who, in these latter days, address their fellows in the tone of prophecy, occupy

an awkward half-way house between inspiration and imposture. Our "Carlyles and Mazzinis," our Edward Irvings and John Ruskins, have the touch of the charlatan on them. Even a Savonarola sinks from his ideal elevation when he mixes up Divine inspirations with the policy of a party. It is much to be wished that the age were come, when men shall no longer wear a hairy mantle with intent to deceive. Right action essentially implies that we act from the heart; Christian feeling essentially involves that we reverence the judgment of our Christian brethren. We must not act, or try to make others act, from hard and fast rules, or from emotional fancies, which do not command the personal conviction of the individual. It appears on the surface as if faithfulness to these principles made Christians strangely unmoral in their action. Why so much ashamed of the will of God as their one rule? Why be Whig or Tory, not always Wilberforces and Shaftesburys? But wise Christians should know how to look below the surface.

In reference to the state as well as to the Church, Theocracy and a tone of authority are hard pushed by Democracy. Christ founded[1] even the Church upon principles fully more than upon authority; and Democracy itself, if clothed and in its right mind, is based[2]

[1] Appendix C., Christ as Founder of the Visible Church.

[2] In Mr. A. J. Scott's noble *Discourses*, Theocracy is used in an ethical sense, as what is necessary for a country's life. But is this correct? Must we not recognise the fact, that the moral consensus, however unhappily, extends beyond the religious? The question we have to ask in practical affairs is, what men will practically admit and obey. "He that is not against us is on our side." Theocracy if you will; but assuredly, whether you will or not, Democracy.

on nothing so much as on Christ. Sooner or later, Christianity must establish such a polity. Christ's very reticence on the subject of politics is the charter of negative freedom to the world; positive freedom is to be gained by a wise and conscientious use of rights. The old national religions were intensely aristocratic. At the root of ancient thought and ancient philosophies, we find the belief in a generic difference between the happy few who know and the ignorant multitude. Christianity, the religion for humanity, swept away all such distinctions. Into the midst of a profoundly cultured, languidly cynical age it launched, not as a dream of theorists, but as an irresistible faith, the belief in the brotherhood of the race. Liberty, equality, fraternity, the watchwords of the revolution, are stolen from Christ, and "marred in the stealing." Beginning by proclaiming, unsparingly, the dismal equality of all in sin, Christianity goes on to tell of a brighter destiny, common to all who will enter on it, in which men become brethren to each other and children of God. Those who receive this faith cannot remain slaves.[1] Hence, in spite of its theocratic errors, the inevitable *nisus* of the spiritual side of Puritanism towards civil liberty. And hence, too, at the present day, it is by no accident that those who have

[1] This would be proved untrue, if we were forced to agree with *Ecce Homo*, that in Christianity "it was believed that men were called to different offices in life, and that, while it was the glory and dignity of some to feel nothing between themselves and God, to others it was given only to see God reflected in wiser and nobler spirits than themselves" (ch. xii.). To this exaggerated inference from the fact that Christianity did not at once crusade against slavery,—a fact easily explained from the practical wisdom of its Founder and Apostles, and from its habit of beginning with principles, not details,—

cast off faith in God and Christ lose faith in man; that hero-worshippers are tyrant-worshippers, looking back lovingly to a mythical age, before the Fall,—before governing aristocracies became unworthy of their place, or Providence (!) set a-brewing the devil's caldron, out of which French Revolutions periodically proceed. Christians see things differently. To despair of the democracy is to deny Christ. The modern revolution is only, on a small scale, replacing inadequate and obsolete political ideals by Christian and adequate ideals.

The new ideals, if higher, are harder. But they are also truer. Indeed, in this matter, we seem to be working slowly back to Christ. In outward things we may be further and further from "primitive purity;" dogmatic certainty itself may be decaying; practical obedience to Christ, far from decaying, may be realised more perfectly than ever. Surely, whether as regards the mission of a powerful nation abroad, or the case of the poor at home, the national conscience is everywhere being quickened. And, with all the manifold faults of this age, is there not more benevolent effort than in any former generation? And is not the doing of God's will the best way to learn Christ's truth? That we are, however feebly, working back to Christ, affords the only ground of hope for this sad generation.

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it is enough to answer that no trace of Mr. Seeley's doctrine appears in any book of the New Testament, whose persistent witness is that God is Father of all, and that He pours His spirit on all flesh that hear the gospel. Of course, it is true that "men are called to different offices in life." No liberty is attained without safety; no safe order arises except through the action of many members in one body with different offices. But the "difference" is not personal, but official,—at most a social rank, not a spiritual caste.

CHAPTER VIII.

CHRIST'S TEACHING IN RELATION TO THE LAW CONSIDERED AS A COVENANT.

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HITHERTO, if the language may be allowed, we have walked along with Christ, side by side. We have watched the kingdom of God superseding and annulling whatever was incongruous with it in the religious life of the Old Testament; preserving and developing whatever was spiritual and essential; throwing into the world those principles whose working out is to occupy the whole of history, till the end come. Hitherto we have been able to walk with Christ, for, in His light, we can see the reasonableness and beauty of all His life. But now we must stay behind, while, like a greater Moses, He passes into the darkness to mediate for us with God. All men lean on Him; all lean with Him on God; but He leans on no man. If He is the founder of salvation, we necessarily must reach a point where the loneliness of Christ will be borne in on our minds. We must reach a point in His teaching where He ceases to stand with us, in the general light of ethical truth, and begins to stand above on God's side, representing God. In a life involving such elements there will be more than can be represented in the limits of a biography. At such a point Christ's words must become dogmatic rather than ethical; for He will be conscious of a secret

personal mission from God. That point we have reached now.

It may be remembered that, on one view of Matt. v. 17, though not on the view adopted by us, we already found Christ professing to "perfect"—and, therefore, in its old form to supersede—the Law. This itself would indicate that the old covenant was to be superseded by a new covenant. There is a hint of the same lesson in the very interpretation "fulfil the prediction of the Old Testament moral ideal." And again, in Luke's version of one of our Lord's utterances on the law and prophets (xvi. 16),—though not in the parallel in Matthew,—we find the same truth indicated. But, passing from these, we shall gain firmer footing, where Jesus explicitly mentions or undoubtedly alludes to the covenant.

Perhaps no term in theology has been so abused by its friends or so unfairly criticised by its enemies as this term "covenant." It has been objected that the conception of a treaty involves the equality of the contracting parties, and, as the treaty's ultimate ground, arbitrary choice on both sides; hence it is said that the conception is unworthy of religion. But this is rather trenchant criticism of the religious imagination, which necessarily works with approximate formulæ. Such criticism has the fatal note of want of historical sense. The critics find the term in such and such ways defective; the Hebrews did not find it so. "Covenant" was, indeed, the maid-of-all-work in Hebrew thought, much as "law" is with us; and we have no more right to insinuate equality of parties, or conventionalism and caprice, when we read in Hebrew literature of a covenant, than we have to think of the myth of a

legislator, or a parliament, or a judge, or a jury, when Mr. Tyndall or Mr. Herbert Spencer speaks of the laws of nature. Perhaps "covenant" had such importance for early thought, just because it was the one sort of law which stood out in plain relief from the half-instinctive mass of traditionary customs. And, as the thought of a covenant was made use of in all speculative emergencies, so the practice of a covenant was common in all possible relations of real life. Conquerors made covenants with the conquered (1 Sam. xi. 1), people with their rulers (2 Kings xi. 4; 1 Chron. xi. 3), nations with their allies (1 Kings xx. 34; Hosea xii. 1), Joshua with Israel (Joshua xxiv. 25). So far was equality from being necessarily supposed when a covenant was spoken of. Not less alien to Hebrew thought was the connection of change or caprice or conventionalism with covenant making. The things that are most certain and regular are spoken of as covenants. So Jehovah speaks of "My covenant of the day, and My covenant of the night" (Jer. xxxiii. 20), not as things which, depending on God's will, may, therefore, be changed at His pleasure, but as things the most constant, fixed, unchangeable. Hence, when God's relation to Israel is said to be a covenant-relation, the thought is not that it is changeable, but that it is constant. Of course, Hebrew thought had no conception of an order of nature, with which it could either compare or contrast God's order of providence. When natural phenomena are referred to God's covenant, this alludes *both* to their regularity *and* to their dependence on God's will. Hebrew monotheism was too young, too fierce, to allow of slipping such an ideal Demiurge, as our "Nature" is, between God's will and God's

world. Yet even God's will, if I may so speak, is enlisted on the side of constancy. One of Jehovah's characteristic epithets as covenant-God is "faithful," which means, true to the covenant, unchanging, ruler of all things, ruler of nature and history alike, for the end of His kingdom. For, finally, we do not deny, that calling the religious relation a covenant relation implies that it is other than a natural relation, that it is one involving, on the side of both contracting parties, moral self-determination.

It is of this covenant, as the whole system of Israel's religion, that we wish to know what Christ taught. It is not to be expected that He should formally discuss the question of its value. The reality and value of God's covenant is implied in His whole life, is asserted in every prayer. From what we have seen we need not affect to anticipate that He will formally repeal the Old covenant and enact the New. If His words and actions imply what may be called a new covenant, that is Christ's teaching on the law as a covenant. For a time the old and new may both be in the world. The moral principles of the new covenant may be left to convince men of the abrogation of the old. Such an attempt as Ritschl's,[1] to show that Christ formally, though not in practice, abrogated the old covenant for His followers, and formally confirmed it for the multitude, errs by over-definiteness. A dispensation, to which three definite and distinct birthdays are assigned,—the beginning of the Baptist's ministry (Mark i. 1, also Matt. xi. 12, and Luke xvi. 16); the beginning of Christ's manifestation (Matt. iv. 17, and Mark i. 15, also Luke xvii. 21); the culmina-

[1] *A. K. Kirche*, p. 29.

tion of Christ's work in His death (Matt. xxvi. 28, and parallels),—cannot be a dispensation heralded with legal forms or imposed with exact rigour. The duty of observing the old law for a time seems to conflict with the giving of a new covenant. But this is only one of those seeming practical contradictions which practice solves. It is enough for us that practice has long ago solved the difficulty, and brought the new covenant to its rights.

A new covenant was not unexpected even before Christ came. One of the outstanding features of Israel's history had been the inadequacy of the covenant to produce a righteous nation. What Christ Himself could plainly discern, what is taught, on Christian grounds, by Paul or the author to the Hebrews, was the bitter experience of contemporary prophets and patriots in Israel. Such experience was one of the subjective sources of Messianic prediction. And not the least remarkable among those utterances of faith regarding the future, which we include under the name of Messianic, was Jeremiah's prophecy of a new covenant (Jer. xxxi. 31),—not the least remarkable, and not the least emphatic. We have a close parallel, on one side, in Joel's doctrine (Joel ii. 28) of the outpouring of the Spirit on all flesh, *i.e.*, of the universality of prophecy in the "last days." But hardly any other prediction is so bold as Jeremiah's in carrying us beyond ritual, and beyond the organised institutions of the age. On the part of the prophet this might be no more than strong rhetoric. It remains for fulfilment to declare, which elements of prediction are to be honoured by literal verification, and which are to be spiritualised or transcended. In the mouth of the

Fulfiller, such language leaps into significance, and must be exactly interpreted. Jesus was conscious of bringing the new covenant. Though He did not often speak of it, or often so much as betray in language the exercise of its prerogatives, there were times when He did both.

The first three Gospels (Matt. ix. 2 and parallels) tell of an occasion on which Jesus revealed Himself as the bearer to this earth of God's forgiveness. It was in Capernaum; the scribes and Pharisees were on the outlook for grounds of accusation; the crowd so thronged Jesus that every access to the apartment where He taught was blocked. But four men, carrying a palsied friend, scaled the roof, lifting up their human burden, then raised the flat tiles, and lowered their friend into the crowded lobby beside Jesus. We are told that Jesus "saw their faith;" unless the faith of the patient is included, we are left to supply a link from conjecture. There is no room, however, for the assumption, that Jesus here speaks and acts merely according to popular and Pharisaic ideas of the Messiah's work or of the connection of suffering with sin. His speech was evidently as spontaneous as it was unexpected. It is possible—as Weiss—that the paralytic had brought on his illness by a life of sin. At any rate, Jesus said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven thee."

It was a new sound upon earth. Men had prayed for the forgiveness of sins; prophets had announced of a particular trespass in reference to its direct punishment, "The Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die" (2 Sam. xii. 13); other prophets had looked forward to an age when sin should be forgiven. But

the age the prophets looked for stood on the dim edge of the future, where the line between earth and heaven is blurred; and, although men might believe God forgave sins in heaven, they could not credit full justification in this life on earth. The words of Jesus are an unheard sound, implying an unheard-of claim. So the Pharisee spies, thinking for the crowd, began to challenge the strange proceeding. "Why doth this man thus speak? He blasphemeth: who can forgive sins but one, even God?" Jesus heard their thoughts, and at once took up their challenge. He did not rebuke them for assuming that God only can forgive; He did claim that He had power to grant forgiveness, and to grant it "on earth." In token of this He immediately healed the sick man, covering Himself with glory and His enemies with confusion. For, as He had said, while it was, indeed, God's work to forgive, and a servant's work to heal, it was easier to say, "Thy sins are forgiven thee,"—an assertion no one could test,—than to say, "Rise up and walk,"—a command of whose efficacy or inefficacy all could judge. From the visible power they could reason to the invisible; He pledged His kingly word that one was as real as the other.

Such, then, was our Lord's view of His own miracles. So perfect was His certainty of His prerogative to grant forgiveness. But what is the exact force of the crucial saying? It occurs in three Gospels; it is given in the very same words, though the contexts are somewhat divergent: "But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins." We read that the multitude, after the cure, "glorified God, which had given such power unto men;" and some exegetes, building on this, will have it that stress is

to be laid on the fact that the Son of man forgives. But the crowd are an indifferent authority; "Son of man" is merely our Lord's usual way of designating Himself; and He could not lay emphasis on it here unless He meant to claim a sphere separate from the sphere in which God forgives; a very absurd view. The emphasis surely rests, not on "Son of man," but on the words "on earth,"—"power on earth to forgive sins." That will mean, not power to forgive sins so far as earth is concerned;[1] that would have been a capitulation; it would have justified the Pharisees' objections; it will mean power to introduce on earth the forgiveness of sins. Jesus can claim nothing less than to found the absolute religious order. That is what He did; in that He was novel; in that His power remains unchangeable. His gospel was a gospel of the kingdom of heaven on earth. The time of preparation "was elapsed" (Mark i. 15); all waiting upon the repentance of earthly authorities, or upon their help, was over; here, in and with Christ and His circle, was the Kingdom; here was the fellowship of God and the forgiveness of sins. Miracle is a token of Christ's high prerogatives on the earth.

The second time when Jesus broke the silence of the new covenant, and spoke in public of its central blessing, is recorded in Luke alone (vii. 36), in a narrative of great beauty. Jesus was invited[2] by a half-friendly Pharisee to dine with him. He went, but was received

[1] *Expositor* for 1882. (Dr. R. E. Wallis.)

[2] We need only deny in a word that this anointing is the same as that by Mary, at Bethany. Probably there is truth in the suggestion of Meyer, that the name Simon has crept from one narrative into the other.

inhospitably and uncivilly. With strange courage an outcast woman, who had seen and heard Christ, and who loved her Saviour, crept into the Pharisee's house, and made that place the scene of a remarkable act of grateful reverence. "She brought an alabaster cruse of ointment, and standing behind at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed His feet, and anointed them with the ointment." Of course the Pharisee caught at the scandal. It was contrary to all his religious ideas that one should have to do with the depraved and outcast, much more that one should tolerate their attentions. Jesus could not know what this woman was; that was incredible; but if He did not know, He was no prophet. Jesus, true prophet of God, read the Pharisee's thoughts, as He had read the thoughts of the more malignant Pharisees at Capernaum, and as doubtless He had read the character of the poor penitent behind Him. Calling the Pharisee's attention, He told a simple parable of a creditor who forgave two debtors, to one a great sum, to the other little; asked him, which would love most? and received the languid answer, "I suppose he to whom he forgave the most." Right, said Jesus—as Nathan said to David, Thou art the man,—clinching the application of the parable at its outset with a strong word. Then, pointing to the woman, who may have listened till now without comprehending, or who may dimly have felt that our Lord spoke good words, He explained the situation; she was the debtor that had been forgiven much; therefore, she loved much; His host—so the inference lay—was the debtor who had been forgiven little; who accordingly loved little, and entertained his Lord with timid

coldness and uneasy constraint. Finally, addressing the woman for the first time, He told her directly that the good news of her forgiveness was no illusion, no uncertainty, no fancy of a bright-coloured story, but the truth; *thy sins are forgiven.* Again the company was startled and staggered by this claim; but Jesus answered nothing. He felt that enough had been said to instruct the candid and reflecting. He dismissed the woman with the assurance that her faith had saved her, and with words of peace.

Those who deal pedantically with religious transactions may find a difficulty here. They may ask, What! did Jesus forgive her, or did He not? If He did, how could the love manifested before He did so be due to forgiveness? If she was already pardoned, why did not Christ avoid seeming to grant forgiveness, especially when that was sure to give offence and to occasion the charge of blasphemy? But such questions are worse than idle. We cannot penetrate into the chancery of heaven, and listen to Divine sentences of acquittal. We cannot say that there is a when, and a why, and a how, in the history of the individual, when God changes His disposition towards him; such an assertion is beyond our competence; it is irreverent; it is empty. The truth about conversion is, that, like the beginning of all rational processes, it is unthinkable. Absolute beginnings involve a contradiction. Even when we look on at myriads of organisms and of minds beginning a history in time, they continue unsolved mysteries. We cannot explain to ourselves how life begins where there was no life, how the activity of thought follows the unconsciousness of infancy, how the estate of sin yields to the estate

of justification. If we fix on one element as the first in the new life, immediately we are baffled by finding that it presupposes others. This woman comes to Christ, drawn by love, and receives forgiveness; yet He does not say, She is forgiven because she loves; He does say, She loves because she is forgiven. So of the paralytic at Capernaum; was not faith the ground of his forgiveness? And faith implies grace; but is grace granted first without forgiveness? Can grace be "cribbed by inches"?—We are thrown back on the fact of transcendent importance, that Christ came to forgive sins "on earth." If there is no logical prius in Christianity, Christ is the historical ground of faith. God's "ordinary means" of grace work through knowledge of Christ's revelation; and even extraordinary grace, if we postulate it, we can only conceive as culminating in an extraordinary knowledge of Christ. What was Divine goodwill towards men, if it remained shut up in the adytum of heaven? The consciousness of forgiveness is the spring of life; it is the gift of Christ, by which "the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts." Or again, what drew the paralytic or the sinner to Christ? Was it not the Divine grace that was in Him? Was it not the knowledge that He came bearing forgiveness and blessing? Without Christ's influence, the very approach to Him, which made possible the comfortable words of express forgiveness, would never have taken place. And yet again; what vitally is the Divine forgiveness? A judicial edict, a hidden process in God's mind? Or is it rather the beginning of God's saving fellowship with the forgiven soul? In this sense, Christ forgave sins on earth. He did not merely proclaim a previous complete good-

will on God's part (though He did this), or draw men to seek and find the Divine sentence of acquittal (though He did this, too); He brought about, in the case of men living on earth, that fellowship, or renewed friendship, with God, which makes up true forgiveness. Hence, though we cannot trace back religion to any one subjective factor, we may, and must, refer all blessedness to Christ, in whom "God was, reconciling the world unto Himself, not reckoning unto them their trespasses;" and in whom also we are "brought to God;" in whom God sought the lost, and men found mercy; in whom God sought men, and men found God. And, further, though it will be impossible to explain the time causation of religious experience by forgiveness, or by the consciousness of forgiveness, or by imposing any other stereotyped routine upon the most solemn and incalculable moments in life, theology will tell us, and will rightly tell us, that the presupposition of all religious goodness, before God or towards men, is this great reality which Christ announced, and which was the bone and marrow of His new covenant,—the forgiveness of sins.

So far we have merely seen that Christ exercised the prerogatives of the founder of the new covenant. By an attentive hearer these words must have been understood in the light of Jeremiah's prophecy. He did not end His ministry, however, without explicitly declaring that that prophecy was fulfilled in Him (Matt. xxvi. 28, and Mark xii. 14). It was at the most solemn moment of His solemn farewell supper with His disciples, when He was instituting the simple ordinance which binds His people together, that Jesus, with reference to His approaching death, spoke of the

wine-cup as "His covenant-blood."[1] A covenant was initiated by sacrifice (Exod. xxiv. 5; Psalm l. 5); Jesus told His disciples that He was initiating a covenant; therefore, necessarily, a new covenant. He was founding His covenant on the forgiveness of sins; therefore, His covenant corresponded to the new covenant that had been promised. His death was no defeat, no separation from God; it was the crown of His work in founding God's kingdom, the perfect conquest of sin. It was at once sin-offering and covenant sacrifice; His death should (Heb. x. 14) for ever cleanse from conscience of sin those who, by means of it, were consecrated to serve God; His blood should be shed "for many unto remission of sins."

Thus we see that, in spite of His reverence for God's former revelations, Christ knew and taught that He was come, not only to found the absolute moral order, but to introduce men to a realm of perfected reconciliation. As yet we have never found Christ comparing the old and the new. It would not have been strange had He nowhere done so; but one occasion is recorded when He was led to do this, and explicitly to teach that salvation depends not on the Law, but on relation to Himself. This precludes every insinuation of incoherence in Christ's teaching, or of unconsciousness on His part of the religious revolution He was inaugurating.

We read (Matt. xix. 16 and parallels) of a certain

[1] "New covenant" (Luke xxii. 20) is probably an unconsciously Pauline touch. (1 Cor. xi. 25; 2 Cor. iii. 6; Gal. iv. 24; not iii. 17.)

ruler who came running to Jesus, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, "Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" This sounded hopeful and interesting. And if Jesus had been what many think Him, a moral "master," with a "method and secret" to impart, nothing could have been more pleasing to Him than such a question. But, in point of fact, it grated on Him. Perhaps He despised the selfishness which, not "seeking first the kingdom of God," asked, "What shall *I* do, that I may have eternal life?" and which, even in personal negotiations, postponed duty to interest. Christ came to enlighten all the people, not to found a coterie; He taught the few, but it was for the sake of the many. Perhaps Jesus detected self-satisfaction in so bold a query. Certainly He discerned that, however fair its aspect, and whatever elements of goodness might be in it, the attitude of the questioner was not truly religious.

Two versions of Jesus' reply are preserved. In Mark and Luke we read that Jesus answered, "Why callest thou Me good? None is good save one, that is God." Many MSS. of Matthew give the same reading; but our revisers have preferred the reading, "Why askest thou Me concerning that which is good? None is good save one, that is God." Now, it may be argued that the former version of the first clause leads up better to the second clause, and that motives of reverence might lead to the creeping-in of a reading, which avoided seeming to indicate, that Jesus refused to be called good. But, on the other hand, such motives of reverence would be very shortsighted; the second clause itself shows us Jesus refusing the title "Good master."

"None is good save one, that is God." And the very fact, that the usual reading leads up more directly to the second clause, may account for its prevalence in Matthew, and for its ousting the other in the tradition or transmission of Mark and Luke. If we can give a suitable meaning to the less obvious reading, we may retain it, not with certainty, but with a measure of confidence. As has already been said, there can be no dogmatic bias in this decision, for there is no dogmatic motive in its favour.

Jesus then, we may suppose, disliked the attitude of the young man, feeling that it gave Himself the place not of a religious authority, but of a rabbi,—a name which He accepted only from those who had given up everything for Him, and thus shown that, implicitly, He was far more to them than a moral teacher. To remedy this, He directed attention away from Himself, with His supposed private goodness and supposed esoteric wisdom, to God, the source of all goodness, and to God's revelation of wisdom in connection with the ten commandments. Of these, Jesus quoted the latter six,—a strange and significant choice, though one cannot pretend to grasp all its motives. This is not the only place where Jesus chose human goodness as the proximate law and test of character.[1] The young man, nothing abashed, rather with the eagerness of one who hoped for satisfaction, but felt that what had as yet been said was no novelty, and therefore brought no help to him, assured Jesus that he had known these all his life, and had done what they bid. Still he did not feel secure of eternal life. What more did he need?

[1] Above, ch. ii., ch. v.

Then it was that Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and told him he needed just one thing,—to sell all he had and give the proceeds to the poor, and to follow Christ. It was too much for him; "his countenance fell at the saying, and he went away sorrowful, for he was one that had great possessions."

Some[1] have supposed that the young man was only backward in his piety. They say that he sought, but failed, when he found them, to follow, "counsels of perfection." But the ethical view of life embraces everything in vocation. There are no works of supererogation in the Christian republic. "When ye shall have done all the things that are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do." And we must allow that Jesus' authority settles the question as to the young man. "How hardly," He says, "shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God,"—implying that the young ruler, at least as yet, was unfit for the Kingdom.

We have to note here, first, the value Christ gives to the old revelation. Jesus does not merely answer the young man in the spirit of his question, when He refers him to the Old Testament law. Such a reference is not with Jesus, as it might be with Paul, a mere irony, intended to drive the inquirer to despair, and so to make him more susceptible of grace. Jesus will deal only with those who are seeking God and His salvation; and all His dealings with men are in that "way of righteousness" which had already been revealed, and which prepared the world for His king-

[1] Dr. Cox, in *Expositor*, Second Series.

dom. To the same effect is what we find in the introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan, if it be lawful[1] to count this a new source of information. To the question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus replies, "What is written in the law? How readest thou? . . . . This do, and thou shalt live." Here, it is true, a shade of irony is hardly to be missed; a shade of displeasure against the questioner is plainly manifest. Nevertheless, it is significant, that Jesus, when asked to speak of the way of salvation, should always refer men from Himself to God's law. He pays it a still more emphatic tribute in the solemn parable of Dives and Lazarus. When the prisoned spirit prays, that Lazarus may be sent from the realms of the dead to evangelise the rich man's brethren, Abraham replies (Luke xvi. 29), "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And, when Dives persists in his prayer, "If one went to them from the dead they will repent," he receives the terrible answer, "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rise from the dead." In this we hear the great and unaffected value Jesus puts on the old covenant as a power of God unto salvation. Do we hear in it also the judgment by anticipation of the Jewish rulers, who had refused to hear the living Christ, and would not be persuaded even by the "power of His resurrection?"[2]

Not less plain, however, in our narrative is the fact, that Jesus, as in so many places, declared the final

[1] Cf. above, ch. v.

[2] So Lipsius (*apud* Holtzmann in *Jahrb.*, 1878), who, therefore, holds the verses to be interpolations.

decision, regarding a man's character and position, to turn upon his relation to Himself. "For My sake," and "for the kingdom of God's sake," are interchangeable. Christ's work and His person cannot be separated; the Kingdom cannot be cut off from Christ. The one thing lacking to the young ruler is what Jesus elsewhere describes as the one thing needful—a hearty, and, therefore, practical attachment to Himself. In the case of the young ruler his attachment to Jesus was to show itself by a voluntary poverty and a participation in Jesus' life of exile, partly doubtless because this prescription was needed on account of the moral ailment from which the young man suffered, partly, too, because a capable and faithful disciple must, for the most part, live as his Lord did, while the Lord dwelt on earth, and partly because a society, which included in its ranks not many rich, or mighty, or noble, could not despise the opportunity of enlisting one, who, sprung from a different rank, was unusually, and in so far specially, gifted. He turned away; and, in turning away, he left his hope of salvation; but it is not, therefore, true that salvation consists in the imitation of Christ by poverty, or by the life of a wandering mendicant. The external surrender of property is the need of one individual; bodily wandering in Jesus' train is a passing form of the Divine life; the abiding demands of God are for surrender of the life, and a spiritual continuance of Christ's temper.[1] But there is another lesson in this story. Salvation is not only a gift but a duty, not only grace but vocation. It admits of being presented to each man in either form; the miser-

[1] Cf. below, ch. ix.

able may embrace its comfort more readily, and so draw the whole into their hearts; the prosperous, the uncontaminated, the young and ardent, are perhaps best presented with the conception of personal vocation. At any rate, that was what Christ held up to the young ruler. But, unless both are present, neither aspect of salvation has truly been attained. We, in our age, think we have less outward opportunity for sacrifice. Perhaps, when the cross is secret, the temptation to refuse it is more insidious and harder to overcome.

Christ, even when He speaks of the value of His person, does little more than hint at the nature of the work He does for His people. His silence was necessary, although He found occasion to break it, and although, as we have seen, His whole attitude, and His whole treatment of the Old Testament, can only be understood if He was founder of a new religion. But, in order to see what that religion was, it must not only be heralded in word or founded in Christ's person; it must be received by a believing community. For that, practically, we have to wait till after our Lord's resurrection. Accordingly, it is less in His announcement than in the response of the repentant Church that we find the monument of Christianity as a religion. And hence our canon is not the mere gospel narrative, but the New Testament, and, in dependence on it, the Old Testament. God's revelation in Christ must always, indeed, be the heart of our faith; but the heart has its place in the body; and to study God's revelation fully we must look at it, not only as it is given, but as it is received and obeyed. In this view Christ's teaching in regard to the covenant is only an introduction to the

apostles' teaching, regarding Christ's death and the new covenant. We, who have both at our disposal, should be able to find religion, and not mere morality, in every part of the New Testament; we should everywhere be able to trace the tacit presupposition of our reconciliation with God through Christ.

CHAPTER IX.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST.

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WE have now reviewed, in every light, Christ's attitude towards the Jewish Law. We have seen how He set it above tradition, and how He set Himself against its traditionalist degraders; we have seen what moral worth He found in it, and what an ethic He developed by its side; we have seen how faithfully He kept it, how He honoured its ceremonies, statutes, and religious uses, and how, while doing so, He hinted at a time in the near future when it should pass away. We are now, therefore, in a position to gather up the results of our study, and to indicate what Christ's authority, tested by His treatment of Old Testament institutions, has shown itself to be.

Readers of a certain school may think this uncalled for. They may fail to see any authority in what has been recorded; they may ask, either in honest faith, or in covert malice, for a more literal observance of Christ's words and example. Some will ask us to do Christ's bidding because He bids it,—not interpreting or qualifying it, or adding any other motive, even though our path should lead to socialism or fanaticism. Such is the true temper, they will tell us, of religious reverence. Others will ask us how we can be Christians when we reverse Christ's example in reference to

the ceremonies of the Mosaic Law. This argument might possibly be more nicely adjusted to modern scholarship, but it could not well be more ingeniously insinuated, than in the sentences which Gibbon puts into the mouth of his Ebionites. "They affirmed, *that*, if the Being, Who is the same through all eternity, had designed to abolish those sacred rites which had served to distinguish His chosen people, the repeal of them would have been no less clear and solemn than their first promulgation; *that*, instead of those frequent declarations, which either suppose or assert the perpetuity of the Mosaic religion, it would have been represented as a provisionary scheme, intended to last only till the coming of the Messiah, Who should instruct mankind in a more perfect kind of faith and of worship; *that* the Messiah Himself, and His disciples, who conversed with Him on earth, instead of authorising by their example the most minute observances of the Mosaic Law, would have published to the world the abolition of those obsolete ceremonies, without suffering Christianity to remain, during so many years, obscurely confounded among the sects of the Jewish Church."[1] Of course, the modern Ebionite is not in earnest, as the ancient Ebionite was, in wishing to introduce the Jewish Law. He only aims at doing what the other unconsciously did; he seeks to dethrone Christ from His religious sovereignty, and to make us believe that

[1] *Decline and Fall*, ch. xv. Compare with this *Sup. Rel.*, iii., 123: "It must be apparent that, in order to remove the obligation of a law and form of worship, believed to have been, in the most direct sense, instituted by God Himself, the most clear, strong, and reiterated order would have been requisite."

the historical Jesus was only a good and wise Jew, who could not dream of abrogating for us that to whose authority He personally submitted. A third objection is still more serious; it attaches to the example Christ set, not in matters of form, but in His personal conduct. We have confessed that His own mode of living ignored the order of this world; must we not confess that His followers, or at least the nobler spirits among them, are called to quit the world and live in imitative isolation? These questions have been incidentally touched on in different chapters; they constitute a challenge to define with care the authority of Christ.

But, in order to reach true conceptions of Christ's authority, or to pay it true reverence, we must respect the mind of Christ. If He asked for a spiritual obedience, literalism is not reverent but irreverent. Mohammed founded a system upon hard-and-fast rules; Loyola and Wesley re-arranged Christianity by means of hard-and-fast rules and methodised emotions; the old covenant itself rested upon national law. But the kingdom of God, in its very nature as an ethical society, is on a different footing. The family of God cannot yield a servile obedience. This is our answer to the charge of defect in Christ's use of His authority. As has well been said,[1] "Jesus must ask, like every one else, to be understood specifically for what He is." His aim was to be a religious authority, not to teach art, or science, or moral philosophy; these, even the last, would only hinder His work. "The more detailed is the programme of a reformation in the life of the spirit, so much the narrower is its scope; the more

[1] Ritschl, *Justification*, iii., 359 (criticising Strauss).

indefinite it is in detail, so much the further and longer does it operate." To found the absolute religion, He must respect its conditions. We have seen the kingdom of God touching and transforming phase after phase of Old Testament life and teaching. Will not our true loyalty consist in serving the kingdom of God, as it has been created by its Founder?

If we are asked for proof that Christ is founder of a religion, we point to the Christian Church. Often, indeed, scepticism challenges the legitimacy of the Church's pedigree. Jesus, we are told, meant to found a community which should obey Him in a certain literal fashion; a sort of Essenism tending to communism or Fourierism on a basis of Judaism. His indifference to politics was due partly to the socialist cast of His ethic, partly to an enthusiastic expectation of the near end of the world. This was Christ's ideal; Paul, or others with him, converted Christ into the head of the Church and the image of God. But, not to say, with Ritschl,[1] that this leaves one in doubt which is Messiah, Jesus or Paul, such criticism has the misfortune to have history against it, and to be eighteen hundred years late in arriving to correct history. One must ask, How did Jesus, if He meant to do something so different, happen to found the Church? How is Paul himself, greatest figure in Church history, content and resolute to rank as a mere satellite of Christ? And why have religious men, during so many ages, found, within the Christian Church, that satisfaction at the hand of Christ which He never sought to confer?

But even this argument may not be relied on too

[1] *A. K. Kirche*, p. 20, criticising Schwegler.

far. It establishes a probability, but does not amount to a demonstration. Not merely because so many causes are represented in the historical fabric of Christianity, that the critics of Christianity may impute to lower sources many excellences which we can plainly see to flow from Christ's initiative. Not only so, but because evil is so largely present in the Christianity of history. It always happens in human affairs, that the original impulse is coloured and changed by the course of events upon which it works. The treasure of God's grace is in earthen vessels; even it, in the lapse of time, acquires a taint. We cannot afford to measure down Christ to the limits of empirical Christianity. So many things alien to His spirit have been imputed to Him by men, and have come to be intertwined with His own performance, that the sceptic will be able to retort on us with disastrous effect one point, and another, and another, if we insist that Christ's purpose and Christian history are equivalents. We may fairly use history to show what Christ did not purpose; we cannot use it to explain fully what He did design; He remains "His own interpreter." And, therefore, it is only to those who know Him that the historical figure of Jesus Christ becomes intelligible. Only faith understands His purposes, and perceives, that, even in the mingled strand of human affairs, His purpose is being fulfilled. His kingdom is truly come, though it tarry; His Church is alive,—in the eye of faith. Only those who reckon themselves to His Church, and who find the riddle of their own life plain nowhere except in the light of Christ, but there perfectly plain, can be expected to believe that Christ meant to found a Church, not a school or a sect, or

can understand what He meant by it. Only those who submit to His authority, and feel its influence over themselves, can understand the authority of Christ.

We may indeed—and the request may seem most moderate—be asked to point at least to the formulation by Christ of His claim to found a Church. But even this demand, as will appear on reflection, ignores the conditions under which the kingdom of God was founded. Christ hints at a Church among His disciples; He never announces it to the world. He was working in the midst of a complex civilisation. He spoke to men to whom God was already revealed. He wished to leave the kingdom of God, which was a living organism and not a machine, to adapt itself quietly to its environment as time passed on. He did not wish to neutralise His absolute revelation by tying men even to His own phrases or habits of life. Why, then, should we ask what is incompatible with the very nature of the Kingdom? There is a difficulty, too, even as to the passages in which Christ claims most for Himself. Unbelief cavils at these, and denies their genuineness; even "honest doubt" stumbles at them. In the Johannine discourses the Church recognises without a doubt the Christ of her faith. Their teaching is profoundly and tenderly Christian; the risen Lord speaks to His people in them; that is the essential matter, and that constitutes their primary verification. But, until a reader is in the right state of spiritual receptivity, he cannot be expected to admit such considerations as these. There is a difficulty, then, in drawing the exact lineaments even of the claims of the historical Jesus. But, in this way, every be-

liever is brought into personal contact with the Saviour. Others cannot act for him; he cannot reach vicarious certainty, or acquire vicarious faith. He finds that Christ keeps His promises; and this coincidence between the offers and the performance of Christ proves that Christ is faithful. In other words, the Christian life is its own evidence. Every believer is thus a new personal witness to Christ, as he could not be if religion were demonstrable to the intellect. Sin, no doubt, is what has hidden God from men. Only Christ brings God back to our hearts, and only to those who believe; but all men are potential believers; they are "born to be saved." Certainty in religion belongs to holiness of life; the pure in heart see God; but God is ready to reveal Himself in the purified lives of all His children.

This point of view is met by the claim of "historical impartiality," or "historical objectivity." Not only Ebionites or ascetics, but critical scholars are found tying us down to unsympathetic literalist interpretation of Christ. This species of interpretation may not be the fruit of hostile animus; it is connected with a general spirit of positivism. But we may well ask, whether it is justified even apart from religious questions. We cannot find it better stated than by Mr. Cotter Morison,[1]—an admirably transparent representative of the *Zeitgeist* in its strength and its weakness. "What is the historical point of view? Is it not this; to examine the growth of society in bygone times with a single eye for the stages of the process; to observe the evolution of one stage out of another

[1] *Macaulay*, "English Men of Letters," pp. 170, 173.

previous stage; to watch the past as far as our means allow, as we watch any other natural phenomena with the sole object of recording them accurately? The impartiality of science is absolute. It has no preferences, likes, or dislikes. It considers the lowest and the highest forms of life with the same interest and the same zeal; it makes no odious comparisons between lower and higher, between younger and older; but simply observes co-ordinates, in time rising to generalisations and deductions. The last work of the greatest of English biologists was devoted to earth worms, a subject which earlier science would have treated with scorn. Now, what does Macaulay do in his observation of the past? *He compares it, to its disparagement, with the present.*" "This is to invert the historical problem: to look at the past through the wrong end of the telescope." Now, without extenuating Macaulay's crimes, or finding the key to the politics of the past in the villas of the present, we may fail to agree with Mr. Morison. First of all, the proposed impartiality of history is noble, but impracticable. Everything that happens is history; if everything is to be recorded, the world will be buried under its own biographies. We must select, with help from the fact itself. "Guiltless, inglorious" Napoleons may lie among the slain of many a battle; they were facts, as real and important as their more fortunate rivals; but we do not elect to write their history. Secondly, in speaking of society as an organism, Mr. Morison has betrayed the importance of looking through both ends of the historical telescope. Keep a chrysalis, and you shall see what it becomes; read the past, as it shows in the light of the present. Organisms, as Kant confessed, constrain us

to use the category of final cause. They show teleology as well as aetiology; all their parts and stages are controlled by a slowly manifested development,—the development of life. And so with the history of society, if society is an organism. For purposes of mere observation the nearer one is to facts the better; but what wise man will propose to write a scientific history of his own time? Thirdly, to call society an organism is to use a category not given with the facts, but found by rational interpretation. It is true that M. Comte has called society an organism; and Comte is the sworn enemy of metaphysic; but to suppose that there is no metaphysic in Comte evinces a touching simplicity of faith. It may be answered, that the Comtist doctrine of society is a mere comparison; and that fact itself selects and evolves sufficiently for the writer of history. And it is no doubt true, that one does not need correct metaphysical views to do good work in the special sciences. But man's rational nature affords the very possibility of history. He stands in the stream of development; the reason within him answers to the embodied reason without him. His interest in the past, and his power to interpret it, are due to his kinship. Where interest fails, men become not objective historians, but antiquarian *chiffonniers*. If that be a desirable manifestation of the historical spirit, let us cut up Gibbon and Mommsen into paragraphs for *Notes and Queries*.

Reason, then, is the author of history. And religion, we allege, must be the interpreter in sacred history. Spiritual sympathy alone can furnish the key to spiritual mysteries. It is true, this position recognises a deep cleft formed by sin in human nature; for super-

natural religion itself does so. All men potentially possess moral and Christian sympathies; but few have them so developed as is necessary to understand Christ. Until the deadly wound in man's nature is recognised, it can never be healed.

We hold, then, that spiritual things are discerned by the spiritual. The authority of Christ is a certainty, its meaning is plain, only to genuine Christians. In other words, the authority of Christ is primarily an authority over the Church or over the kingdom of God. Secondarily, Christ is to be served in all departments of life; for all belong to the kingdom of God. But the moral consensus may extend beyond the religious; and, if men are willing to be governed in their conduct by Christian principles, Christians must be content, for the time, if they can do their Master's will, to co-operate with those who do not acknowledge the Master whom in part they serve. But, it may be objected, can Christ's authority not reach the unconverted? How can we even make men responsible for failing to treat uncertainties like certainties?

In the first place, we may answer, what does not amount to a demonstration, may establish a probability. No one can deny the impressiveness of Christianity as a stupendous historical fact, or ignore its claim to be conscientiously investigated. Perhaps, as the scientific treatment of the Christian origins is exhaustively worked out, many more points may emerge from alleged uncertainty into the region of admitted fact. But, even if this process were complete, the methods of science are for the few; and, though the results of science may pass from hand to hand, it will not suffice to build a whole life on a foundation of second-hand

results. There must be a more direct method of personal conviction, a nearer access for every soul to the only fountain of life.

And, certainly, the Christian doctrine of sin forms a most legitimate make-weight in the case of many. Mankind, as a whole, are unconscious of sin; the world is convinced of sin only by the approach of righteousness. But, once the truth is proclaimed, conscience pleads guilty. The astonished soul finds itself newly revealed to itself; God's revelation has proved the first interpreter of the heart of man. It falters, "Thou hast harped my fear aright." The former sceptic is forced down from his attitude of calm inquiry; if he continues to resist, he resists on his knees. But, he asks himself, is it not probable that the authentic revealer of such a truth is to be trusted still further? Others may fail to be thus summarily affected by the charge of sin; but the moral reasonableness of the Gospel speaks to them in one voice or another; point after point grows certain, as conscience is educated. God has His own method of commending His word to the hearer. He leaves not Himself without a witness. Internal evidence, in the true sense of the word, is the strength of Christianity. The inherent reasonableness of the message may be drawn out in argument; it becomes a personal conviction in experience by the witness of the Spirit; until, in judgment or in mercy, God is again revealed in the souls of His lost children.

Nor is this all. The authority of Christ is primary; the authority of Scripture is secondary; but both are needed. Scripture, in so far as it extends beyond the record of the revealing and redeeming facts, is the

complement of revelation. The primary matter is the knowledge of God in Christ; the primary matter is the worship of Christ and transaction with Him for salvation; but, because the Scriptures enlighten for this and help in it, and because they embody Christianity and exemplify the nature of communion with God, as no other book can, the Church in all ages, with poor attempts often at evasion, has agreed to see in the Bible her own belief, and to count it a God-given treasure, the abiding revelation of His mercy, the ever fresh source of inspiration. Those who are enlightened from on high understand the Scripture witness to Christ. In essential outline they are at one, and may grow more and more in agreement. If unenlightened, they need not think to supersede spiritual sympathy by logical correctness. The witness of the Spirit cannot be replaced by anything else; but it may be sought and found. That witness will become a consciousness as a solemn and tremendous sense of reality in reading the words of prophets and apostles. It will be plain that spiritual things are no Brocken spectre, cast by our own subjectivity, but the ultimate realities of existence. God's witness to them will be felt to be indeed the Word of God. Force has failed in the past to secure Christian unity; logic has failed; spiritual sympathy has hardly been fairly tried. It cannot fail, if, indeed, there is one life which dwells in God's children, not as a fancy but as a fact.

There is yet another element to take account of in God's witness to men. Christ, the Scripture, and the Church are correlates. When, in virtue of Christ's revelation of God as a reconciled Father, forgiving sin, Christians are encouraged to approach God with the

service of children in spite of the sin that clings to their actions; when, in virtue of the revelation of God's abiding grace, which Christ gave us at the cost of all the suffering of His life, we, in spite of suffering, rejoice in God, and overcome the world through the same indifference to its rewards which Christ displayed, and so begin already to taste[1] eternal life; when, in consequence, through Christ, the mind of God regarding sin and righteousness is formed in us, and, either privately by humility and patience and prayer, or publicly by prayer and worship, we express our faith,—then the authority of Christ reaches its end, in the perfecting of His work of reconciliation, and His witness is prolonged among men. It is only within the Church that individual Christianity shows in its true light. Ideally, the Christian life is one of continual confidence in God and devotion to Him. But even now, though not, one may hope, to the same degree as in the dispensation of the Psalmist, the religious life has its ups and downs. We do not expect God's Fatherliness to be shown by His granting us constant prosperity; nor do we find that, in keeping His covenant, He grants us without a break even the sunshine of His grace. But, in the Church, earth makes her nearest possible approach to the Christian ideal. Here they always worship; here they never refuse to repent; here, Sunday after Sunday, the Creed is said without a falter; or, if the congregation falter, it is not from want, but from a flood of feeling. In the Church the Bible is understood, and legibly written

[1] Ritschl, *Justification*, iii., § 52. Whatever may be thought of Dr. Ritschl's work elsewhere, his treatment of this subject amounts to a religious discovery of the first order.

out in saved human lives. This is the work of Christ's authority, plain to all men.

Thus the Church, the Bible, and Christ, God's indissoluble threefold witness, publish abroad the Word of Life. And yet it remains true that "none knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him."

To sum up. The authority of Christ, as shown in His treatment of the old covenant, is explained by the fact that He is founder of a new covenant. From its nature, legalism is excluded in the interpretation of His words, and literalism in the following of His example. Christ wished to be founder of a Church. The Church's existence is the best proof that He did so. If this proof can never amount to a certainty for outsiders, it does so, by the continual witness of the Spirit, for all true members of the Church. Though the witness of the Church has been splintered by sectarianism,—partly through man's sin, partly through the demand for an impossible unity in creed and ritual—that error is essentially an excrescence, and need not be permanent. Scripture, the Church's own standard, might seem a stronger and safer witness to the world. But the same causes which have broken up the Church have led to endless differences in the interpretation of Scripture. The several elements of God's witness need each other. The witness of Scripture implies acceptance of the witness of Christ. In other words, Scripture is understood by those who are Christ's, and who, therefore, normally and properly constitute the Church, and constitute one Church. Spiritual unity, with harmony, or at least with sympathy, will be the note of a purified Church, embracing in its catholic fellowship the whole

manifestations of Christian life. This embodiment and revivifying of Scripture, in the hands of the Spirit of God, who is poured out upon all flesh, will perfect the witness of Christ to the world, and will exhibit mankind's appropriate obedience to the authority of Christ.

CHAPTER X.

THE VALUE TO OUR LORD OF HIS JEWISH BIRTH.

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IN the last chapter we looked at our Lord's work, in relation to the Law, as it presents itself from the standing-ground of Christianity. In that view it almost seemed as if His connection with the Jewish people was fortuitous. But the passages bearing on the subject come near giving an opposite impression. It is difficult not to infer from them that Israel bounded our Lord's horizon. In sending out the twelve He began His instructions to them with the words, "Go not into any way of the Gentiles, and enter not into any city of the Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." To a Gentile woman He said of Himself, "I was not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, xv. 24). In order to complete our recapitulation, let us endeavour to clear the marches between these opposite conceptions of the value to our Lord of His Jewish birth.

We shall begin by inspecting those passages which afford us direct information on the subject. They are the passages which concern our Lord's dealings with the Gentiles. Let us take first a passage found in two Gospels (Matt. viii. 5, and Luke vii. 2),—a passage whose historicity is beyond question by any conscientious criticism, and which affords us a point of view from

which to judge of other narratives. An officer of the Roman army, who was friendly to the Jews, if not a proselyte of the gate, sent the elders of the synagogue at Capernaum,—or, according to another account, came in person,—to plead for a son or servant who lay sick. The story evidently belongs to an early time in our Lord's ministry. Without any hesitation our Lord consented to go to the centurion's house, and work the miraculous cure desired. Of this let us take distinct notice. If Jesus was delayed, it was by a second embassy or second petition from the Gentile soldier himself. The soldier felt himself unworthy to be honoured by a visit from Jesus; and, arguing from his own experience as a man who knew what it was both to obey and to command, he asked the Lord, as He was, and where He was, to speak that word of command, which, uttered by One who had proved Himself to possess such power over nature, would certainly be sufficient. This prayer drew from Jesus the memorable saying, "Verily, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel." Then, in compliance with the officer's prayer, He wrought the cure at once, where He was.

Two points are noteworthy in this narrative. The first is, that Jesus, before doing the miracle, had proof of faith. Faith was the plea He always required (ix. 28, xiv. 31, xvi. 8, xvii. 17; Mark ix. 23), and never disappointed (viii. 2, ix. 2, 22, etc.). The second, it was not His choice, but that of the centurion, that the cure should be worked from a distance. Our Lord has promised to go to the patient's bedside. Hence the generalisation, that our Lord conferred miraculous blessing on Gentiles only from a distance,

is inaccurate. There was a special reason in each case.

In the case next to be noticed (John iv. 50), the miracle was done at a distance as a test of faith. Some harmonists identify this narrative with the one just discussed. It is liker Matthew's version than Luke's; but if the transaction described is the same, one or all accounts have been altered almost beyond recognition. Here Jesus is not at Capernaum, but at Cana; and this nobleman is as backward in faith as the other was advanced.

We now come to the story of Christ's dealings with the Syrophœnician woman (Matt. xv. 22; Mark vii. 25). Let us carefully note the circumstances. Our Lord (Matt. xv. 21) had left the Holy Land. He was seeking a time of rest. He was recruiting,—perhaps in body, but far more in spirit,—in order to resume (as He soon did, ver. 29, *sq.*) the drain of incessant labour. When a woman came crying, "Have mercy on me, O Lord, Thou Son of David," so that she called attention to the company of strangers, He felt that, by answering her prayer, He would make Himself liable to a host of other petitions. He knew by experience how thronged His hours were in every new place He visited. He had not come here to seek a mission of His own choice; He "was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (ver. 24). He had come here only for rest. Thus He could not do as the disciples asked, grant the woman's prayer (and go with her?) in order to be quickest rid of her. When she came and fell before Him, saying, "Lord, help me," He repeated His difficulty. He was sent to the "children of the kingdom;" and, although the more He loved them the less He was loved, He

would not, because of His own pain, take away their food, and give it to the animals whose claim is so very far less.[1] It was not right that He should take so much time, strength, gospel, away from the Jews by giving them to Gentiles. An abrupt offer of cure at a distance lacked its warrant, and might have over-strained the woman's faith. But the woman,—how strange it is, that even when Jesus' attitude was seemingly repulsive, He set such deep chords sounding in those about Him! —won the day by accepting His argument. "Yes surely, Lord![1] it is while the children are being fed that the dogs are fed, for crumbs fall to their share." *Give me my crumb*, she said. And Jesus, moved by such faith, involving, as Mark brings out, such loyal understanding of the situation, granted the prayer of proved faith, as He always did. And He wrought the cure, it needs no words to tell us, in the simplest, least obtrusive manner; hence, at a distance.

What is true of Christ's dealings with Gentiles is true of His dealings with Samaritans. If we take John iv. 4 in its natural sense, His mission to Sychar was a mere episode, occasioned by the direction of a journey. And, in healing ten lepers, one of whom was a Samaritan, it is certainly curious, if it be an accident, that Jesus (Luke xvii. 12) effectually tried their faith by sending them off, uncured as yet, to appeal to the priest for a certificate of healing.

We are thus led to the result, that Christ extended His blessings to Gentiles on occasion, without pre-

[1] See Weiss, *Matthäusev.* The attempt to take the word *dogs*, either here or Matt. vii. 6, as the usual Jewish name of contempt for Gentiles, is as uncalled for as it is repulsive.

judice to His Jewish mission, under proof of the presence of faith. This in itself seems to show an outlook beyond the Jewish people; and there are many passages which confirm this (Matt. viii. 11, xxi. 43; Luke iv. 24, *sq.*). Indeed, it could not be otherwise, in consideration of what the prophets had foretold regarding the Messiah's day. But how, then, are we to understand the rigid confining of His earthly ministry to Israel? What would have been improper in a Gentile tour? What is the special value to our Lord of His Jewish birth?

Here passages of Scripture fail us. If we are to proceed, we must take our courage in our hands, and do the best we can in the way of construction.

First of all then, it may be remarked that it is a spiritual law that what is to be the property of the race first becomes the property of a smaller circle. It is no mere fancy that sees in Greece God's elect to teach the nations wisdom and beauty, or in Rome God's elect to teach lessons of law and government to all generations. Similarly, but in a higher sense still, every believer in Christ must see in Israel God's elect, who is put through the initial stages of revelation and of fellowship with the unseen God. At first, no doubt, the choice is plainer than the purpose of the choice. Perhaps it may even be plainer for a time, that Jehovah is God of Israel, whom Israel must serve, than that Jehovah is God of all the earth. The one is a religious truth, the other might be a mere dogma; but, by-and-bye, each is seen to include the other. And correspondingly the religious truth of election—"Ye did not choose Me, but I chose you"—is seen to include and lead out into the moral truth of election,—"I will also

give Thee for a light to the Gentiles,"—"neither for these only do I pray, but for them also that believe on Me through their word; that they may all be one; even as Thou, Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us: *that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me.*" To be chosen by God, it is seen, implies being chosen for service.

The education of Israel, however, began in an external way. Israel was the chosen; not Israelites as persons. The old covenant was founded on a redemption; but it was a redemption from bondage, not from sin. It gave gifts of grace, but they were in the form of legal privileges, held on a legal tenure. It is hardly too much to say, that the old covenant was founded less on the forgiveness of sins than on the ignoring of sin. The astonishing assumption of the Levitical system is, that, except for accidental errors, men may please God throughout life in a satisfactory way. That men in affliction have none the less satisfied the claim of God's covenant, is the argument of Psalm xliv. Even a psalm of so different a type as Psalm xviii. is equally removed from sense of guilt. It is a prolonged shout, not to say shriek, of triumph, unshadowed by repentance, unclouded by doubt or fear; a strange instance of uncompounded simplicity of emotion. In point of fact, while the Church existed in the form of a national theocracy, it could not but be inadequate to the truth of man's religious condition. This was both its strength and its weakness. The individual saint was not left alone, in the bondage of legalism, to earn his salvation through obedience; he was borne up, as on eagles' wings, by the faith of the whole community; he knew that God had elected

the nation. Hence the error[1] of supposing that the whole Old Testament Church worked through law to grace. On the other hand, the limitations of prophecy are as much involved in the conditions of the old covenant as are the germs of development. The limitations of the covenant generated unrest, which led to looking forward and upward. If the unrest of the Old Testament was due only to sin and misrule, what guarantee was there for progress, or for the old covenant yielding to the new? It was by the old covenant, however, as a national theocracy, that God was able to make a small group of tribes learners on behalf of humanity.

Doubtless, they were learners on their own behalf, too; and, at first, though it delayed, the promise of glory and piety was bright. Some time is needed before the spiritual advantages, or limits, of a system work themselves out in practice; and it was some time before the national covenant with Israel declared its inadequacy. Yet, as an imperfect revelation, it was certain, as tried by the highest standards, to fail. And, if it failed in religion, it must fail politically as well. In particular cases, it reared splendid and noble characters. The differences in individual history are infinite and incalculable; and the satisfaction of an early age with what we deem meagre half-truths is inexplicable to us who are later born. But, dispensationally, Mosaism was foredoomed to sorrow. What

[1] So still, Dr. P. Fairbairn's *Revelation of Law in Scripture*.

[2] In reference to Riehm's most suggestive *Messianic Prophecy*.

does not produce true holiness, cannot, in the long run, ensure respectability or public prosperity; an eternal truth, which is always receiving fresh illustration among sceptical and sinful nations.

No doubt, God might have granted to a faithful nation progress without sin; but not without pain. As in the case of the human race, so in the case of Israel, we may imagine mankind groping upwards, retaining hold of God's strength, stumbling, but not falling. It was not to be so. And, in point of fact, among imperfect men, moral faithfulness on a low stage of progress is too often associated with spiritual blindness to the necessity for further progress. Other things co-operated with moral failures in giving the signal for advance. It would be harsh and presumptuous to allege that there is sin in the sad complaints made by Old Testament prophets and singers of evil. Yet the sin of others doubtless reacted heavily on these pure souls, and constituted their burden; while it is precisely in the overruling of sin for good that we trace the working of Providence, where God does what man cannot and dare not do.

In these or in such ways a time came, when the whole national fabric collapsed. Prophetic insight did not wait till the crash arrived to denounce the faithlessness and sin of the people, or to assure them how things must end. When all went most prosperously, an Amos started up with his message of doom, or an Isaiah rebuked the godless and precarious success of the rich. The ideal of the Old Testament, in spite of the partial nature of revelation at that time, was a lofty ideal; it had a spring of development in itself; but the contrast between the ideal and the actual was

increasingly painful. The covenant was founded in grace; it was able to bring salvation to generations of saints; yet on the broad scale it failed.

But, when it failed, the prophets were empowered to awaken a living hope for the future. The predictive element is thus native to prophecy. At least, written prophecy, as we know it, begins[1] with the message of destruction for the whole existing national order, along with a message of hope for the future. In regard to the Messianic promise, both elements in the covenant—both its ideal excellence and its actual failure—are important. If there had been no ideal excellence in the religion of Israel, prophetic prediction would have been mere idle boasting. What God had done was earnest to His people of the greater things He would yet do; what God had already done gave them the right to believe His promise. On the other hand, had there been no actual failure in Israel's religious history, there would have been no room for outlook to a better future. Progress would have been arrested; permanence would have been stamped on an undeveloped order; but such permanence is not stability; it is stagnation. "If that first covenant had been faultless, then would no place have been sought for a second." This is true synthetic progress, this is the true law of historic growth, when progress resumes the past in a higher form, but when its advance is mediated by the failure and annulling of the outward fabric of the past. There is negation as well as reassertion in every real case of growth. Linear development is impossible even in the lowest forms of life.

[1] So Duhm, W. R. Smith. A modified statement in Riehm, as above.

But the prophecy, which had already caught sight of the future, was not emancipated from the conditions of the present. The prophets had it given to them to maintain the people's faith in Israel's God, and to refresh their courage, but not to write history in advance, not to describe the event as it actually took place. The broad outlines are there: the spiritual principle is firmly grasped; many of the details, apparently, are foreshadowed. But the most essential details, even when they are foreshadowed by God, are not foreknown by men. Old Testament prophecy is still prophecy from an Old Testament standpoint. It takes many forms; it runs out from many points of ideal excellence, or of ideal excellence joined with actual failure; it is now typically Messianic, now consciously predictive; it gives us Jeremiah's promise of the spiritual centre of Christianity, and the second Isaiah's picture of the suffering servant, as well as the more popular predictions of kingly splendour. But prophecy on the whole, as well as the popular expectation, described the unknown in terms of the known. That was necessary, if God's message was either to come through men of that generation, or to be received by the generation to whom He addressed it. The message took the form of a promise of all that was best, holiest, most peaceful and glad, in the nation's recollection, only better, holier, more peaceful, more joyous. The golden age of the past became the key to the golden age of the future.

When we turn from prophecy to fulfilment, we encounter another case of synthetic progress. Here again the advance is made, not merely by reassertion of the prophetic ideal, but by negation of its outer form. Christ is known as Christ, not only because He fulfils

prediction, but because He transcends it. Each is alike part of the evidential value of prophecy in its connection with Christ's work. It was open to any one to claim to be Messiah. Bar Cochba, perhaps Judas of Galilee, Simon Magus too, and other impostors, if we may believe the Fathers, all tried to play the *rôle* of Messiah. And where is the result of their ambition? The endeavour to re-establish David's throne in a sea of blood was drowned in blood. All these were endeavours of false men. The only true and spiritual man that might have played the part, the Baptist, was too true and spiritual to make the attempt; all his force is poured out in his witness to Jesus. But Jesus' plan of Messiahship is beyond the reach of fraud. When we have a problem to solve, and fail, we may dash our heads wildly against it; but, until the elements of the problem are re-arranged, we shall make no further progress; when the elect spirit is raised up who is to solve the problem, the elements re-arrange themselves before his eyes, and his work is easy; for the re-arrangement is due to the spirit of the solution, the spirit of that higher wisdom to which the problem has ceased to be a problem; his changed thoughts regarding the order and importance of different elements in the problem are the painless birth-pangs of the solution. And what is true of a theoretic problem is true of a practical task. Men always think wrongly of it till it is achieved; and while they think wrongly of it, its performance is impossible. Thus, while men expected the absolute religion to come through the literal re-establishment of the Davidic empire, their thoughts were on wrong lines, and their efforts, hopes, or even prayers, were miscalculated. But, when the Elect Spirit was

raised up, who should bring men to the absolute religion, the problem at once altered its form; and this was part of His work. For the right conception of a practical problem is as inextricably joined with its performance, as the right view of a theoretical problem is with its solution. One man cannot say how the thing ought to be done, and hand on the doing of it to his successor. Those beautiful spirits, who aim high and fail, do not fail because of their beautifulness, but because their aim was less high and less wise than it ought to have been. His own vitality and God's providence promise the man who has understood a crisis that he shall solve it. Thought and the action are but hemispheres of a living whole. And so the first proof of Jesus' Messiahship, and the first part of His work, was that matchless ideal of His work which ruled His life. That a king should reign in righteousness, and princes rule in judgment; that a man should be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; as rivers of water in a dry place, and as the shadow of a great rock in a weary land—this was a sort of kingship that only Jesus could either think of or discharge. How poor and how weak by comparison was the kingship with which those pseudo-king-Davids, the false Messiahs, tried to put off men! Their empires fell at the first touch of the enmity they had dared. But the secret of our Lord's work was its simplicity. His Divine strength was perfected in utterest weakness. The dream of centuries simplified itself before His eyes, till it became almost easy. Not even the condescension of His ministry is more wonderful than, from another point of view, is its simplicity. Eighteen years of waiting, three years of teaching, and of the lowly use

of miracle, a few hours of unfathomed suffering—and the sin of the world was taken away. Thus our Lord realised the Law's ideal, which was also the ideal of prophecy, by fulfilling the types and predictions of prophecy. But His fulfilment is an interpretation from a higher point of view. The argument from prophecy is also an argument for prophecy. To say that Christ in transcending it fulfilled it, is no tortuous device of a baffled supernaturalism, but the fact of the case, the recognition of the law of historic growth, the due tribute to Christ's greatness. In Christ all evidence for Christianity centres ; except in the understanding of His work, and in its entrance into our own life, we can find no proof that Jesus is Christ, or Christ is God. And the history of the Old Testament, considered as the record of the growth of man's life in God's favour, appears, the more we know it, the more natural, simple, free from arbitrary elements. In this is manifested God's wisdom. To Israel He gave the perfect and fitting preparation for Christ as they could receive it ; to Christ He gave a prepared people, so far as they had a high ideal and a longing expectation for Him ; to the world He gave perfected redemption in the Christ.

We must not rashly conclude that anything said in the New Testament is inconsistent with this state of the case. When Paul speaks of the law as necessarily, and in accordance with God's will, making men worse (Rom. v. 20; 1 Cor. xv. 56; Gal. iii. 19) rather than better in their condition,—as having no connection with grace except in so far as it prepared men to throw themselves on the grace of Christ,—his account of the matter, though doubtless true of his own history, is not by any means true of all men. The Law was founded

in grace, though not, it is true, in a full manifestation of grace. The Law was able to awake peace and joy in many a psalmist. Even in Paul's own day, James preferred to speak of Christianity as "the perfect law," and found nothing strange in calling it "the law of liberty." Paul accentuates only one side of the truth. He expresses the judgment passed, from a Christian standpoint, on the imperfect dispensation. "When that which is perfect is come," it often seems to us incredible we should have lived and endured during the preparatory stages of life. Their healthy vigour has grown to seem an intolerable bondage. Similarly, when the author to the Hebrews (ix. 10-13) speaks of the Old Testament sacrifices as "carnal ordinances," which "sanctify unto the cleanness of the flesh," he is expressing, not what was in the mind of Old Testament worshippers, but what is in his mind as he looks on Christ's sacrifice. The perfect has antiquated the imperfect. No doubt we are apt to think that the author's teaching is, that the old covenant sacrifices were civil rites, without religious value, because destitute of religious meaning or aim. And it is historically true, that the sin offerings of the Levitical code are meant to atone for improprieties or mere errors rather than for sins. But the Old Testament was a religion—not to say that it was a religion in which civil, social, and sacred were uniquely intertwined—and religion poured all its depth of feeling into every prescribed ordinance. This is recognised, too, in the Epistle to the Hebrews. The author sees in the sacrifices he is depreciating (x. 1, *sq.*), not a yearly atonement for the year's improprieties, but a yearly attempt to atone for sin,—an attempt which, in his judgment, turned out a

yearly failure; did nothing else, as regarded the conscience, than betray every year that the sense of sin was unremoved; achieved no actual result beyond those outward privileges denoted by "cleanness of the flesh." Now, this judgment, I say, is the feeling of a Christian man towards pre-Christian rites. In their own dispensation, animal sacrifices need not have been out of relation to the conscience, and we know of historical occasions when they expressed repentance and faith, and brought men peace.

Hitherto we have spoken of the preparation for Christ, which the Old Testament afforded by its ideals and by the anticipations it aroused. We must also speak of another side of its work. We must consider the training it afforded to character, and the preparation for discipleship which it thus included.

The first element in this training consisted in the fact that the Old Testament was a spiritual religion. It invited men to communion with God. The Jews knew what they worshipped; salvation was theirs. How real this practice of piety was, and how deep, we may see by turning to the devotional literature of the Old Testament in the Book of Psalms. Here every form of religious experience has a voice—royal, national, ecclesiastical, prophetic, private. There is confession of sin; there are bursts of praise; there are longings for the Deliverer and glowing pictures of His reign. And through them all we perceive the utterance of a life wholly devoted to God,—not so wise in understanding His ways as Christians ought to be, or so patient and untroubled in faith where these ways seem dark; but, perhaps all the more, hanging visibly on God's favour, depressed when He turns away for a moment,

contented if He but smile again, more and more clearly perceiving that this, and not whatever God may give to be the vehicle of this life, is the soul's true joy. "One thing have I desired of the Lord." "Thou hast put gladness into my heart more than in the day that their corn and their wine increased."

But there was another side to this training. Communion with God not only accustomed the heart to His worship, but introduced the heart to a knowledge of its own sin. We are too apt to speak of this as if it were peculiarly the work of the Old Testament law—a sort of law-work, or orthodox routine of conversion illustrated in history on the great scale. But this is merely an exaggeration of the Pauline view of the Law. The Old Testament was an experience in grace; its saints had religious communion, not only a preparation for it. And it is the experience of many Christians, that their own history—if only because of their idiosyncrasy—gives them less conscious teaching in God's grace than it does in their own sinfulness. The normal religious life has both; it grows in the joy and frequency of Divine fellowship; it grows in serious appreciation of the evil of sins which at one time it passed lightly over. The Old Testament had both; in point of fact, it is an illustration of religious experience according to its normal truth. It trained men in worship, but it did more. It began with deliverance from outward evil, with the establishment of a national theocracy, with bidding men live rightly. Their failure taught them their sin. The Law was their tutor to bring them to Christ. Doubtless, as has already been said, the Law continued for long to be prized as a means of religious communion with God. Even when its public

operation was impeded, private piety chose out the Law as the revelation of God's Wisdom, and made it by preference the centre of a special type of religion. This "love for the Law" lasted even while sin was being taught through the Law; the period of the Law overlapped the period of finished grace, and the New Testament has a James as well as a Peter, a Paul, a John. None the less, sin was urged on the consciences of men; and the Law could not fail to play its part in this. Other things co-operated. Liberty was lost. God's anger against sin was seen in the nation's adversity. Year after year of sacrifice and of repeated atonement could not fail to do their work on the mind of sensitive worshippers. For a time, indeed, there was balm in Gilead; and the sense of sin the old covenant roused, it found means to allay. When the Psalmist asks, "If Thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand?" he quiets himself by adding, "But there is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared," and is at peace again. Even Psalm li. is less remarkable for its unparalleled depth of penitence than for its high and unwavering confidence in God's lovingkindness and in His accepting and forgiving mercy. But, by the time the Law has come to be viewed as Paul views it; by the time a man who had sought God can say, "The commandment, which was unto life, this I found to be unto death;" by the time a theory of the old dispensation is based on that experience of the Law,—it is evident that it is becoming old, and is waxing aged, and is nigh unto vanishing away. Its work is done. Men's faith, and expectancy, and the bitter fruit of their own doings, have made them, as far as may be, ready for Christ.

But, when we think of Israel as made ready to be Christ's people and His servants, we are confronted by the fact that Israel, as a whole, rejected Him.

Still, God's education of Israel was far from wasted. Its lessons, as God had designed they should, passed to all the world. The partial and simpler revelations of God continue to arrest, to edify, to save, often coming with a fresher thrust of surprise than what is higher but is dulled by familiarity. Christ found His witnesses, too, in Israel. Our New Testament is the work, under God, of Jewish pens. The Apostle of the Gentiles himself is a Hebrew of Hebrews. And if, in God's providence, as Paul teaches us, the salvation which failed to seek the Gentiles through the salvation and service of Israel, came to us with accelerated speed and undiminished certainty by the refusal of Israel to hear, it is quite possible, in consistency with this, that Ritschl may be right[1] in affirming, that Gentile Christianity was retarded by having to pass for itself through the stages of legal development, and that the world lost, even while it gained, by Israel's unbelief.

Further, we should remember that, however unworthy it proved, however unrepentant, Israel formed a sphere for our Lord's labours. His strict confinement of His work to Israel need not be derived only from Israel's prior right, if we fail to justify it by Israel's superior faith and usefulness ; it may well be, that it was spiritually fitting for Christ to work within the bounds of a chosen people. On such a subject it would be conceit to expect perfect distinctness of certainty. But we need feel no jar or contrast between Christ's restric-

[1] See below, Appendix D, p. 290.

tion of His work to Jews and His purpose of mercy for mankind.

There is a paragraph (Matt. xxviii. 19; Luke xxiv. 48; Acts i. 8) which represents the risen Lord as giving the disciples a commission to all the world. While those who deny the supernatural make short work of this statement, others (as Weiss) point out that the sketch in Matthew,—containing, as it does, no reference to the farewell interview at the Ascension,—is an ideal or generalised portrait of the risen Lord's visible intercourse with His disciples. With this is associated the suggestion, that the apostolic commission is the mere dramatising of the Church's conviction, that in the heathen mission she was carrying out the will of the glorified Lord. We are bound, however, to account for the entrance of this conviction into the consciousness of the Church of Jerusalem, with whose traditions we are dealing. To us this commission is but the breaking forth of our Lord's underlying purpose from that reticence, which He had imposed on Himself during His ministry, the better to fulfil it.

One topic still claims a reference. Our Lord's sayings as to His second advent present a dark and entangled problem. It would be useless to enter on it here. But a solution in a certain direction must be protested against. There is, *e.g.*, a theory, based, not without plausibility, on one or two texts in Matthew (x. 23; xvi. 28, with xvi. 21, and parallels), to the effect, that Jesus looked for His resurrection in the form of a speedy return to the earth after His passion, and for the completion of His kingdom in an earthly reign. This would degrade our Lord's spiritual wisdom, and His refusal of an earthly kingdom, to a mere happy

accident or an amiable enthusiasm. On such a view,[1] the future He sought could only be Jewish, particularist, earthly.

Now, any theory of this sort has many exegetical difficulties. Other Gospels modify the impression made by Matthew's record of these texts. The first Gospel itself in other texts, though it only, represents Jesus as looking forward, not to a kingdom in Israel, but to the rejection of Israel altogether from His kingdom (viii. 12, xxi. 43). Thus dogmatism, as to what the man Christ Jesus expected, is very ill placed. We might admit prophecies of a speedy Parousia. Jesus may have seen coming history, as the prophets saw it, in perspective. He may have described a future, as the prophets often did, whose coming was conditional on the faithfulness of God's people; and the sin of the Church may have subserved God's hidden purpose of delaying the second advent. What is certain is this, that Jesus never looked for any consummation of the world's development that would have been unworthy of Him. After the study we have made we may surely judge ourselves reasonably entitled, as well as religiously bound, to exclude any such view.

No doubt there is a great fascination in the effort to understand the human development of Jesus. The most interesting, sacredest, purest of great men, He casts a spell alike on believer and unbeliever. Still, "there is no historical character whose motives, objects, and feelings remain so incomprehensible;" and

[1] A different but not a safer turn is given to the theory as it is worked out in detail by Weiffenbach, *Wiederkunftsgedanke Jesu*. See also Holsten, as above.

I suspect this is due to more than the dogmatism of "church doctors or even apostles." The human development of Jesus is the childhood of Christianity, holy, pure, separate from manhood's sin; it is lost to us, as the childhood of humanity is lost to us, or as our own childish view of the world has irretrievably disappeared from our own imagination. We cannot, even by "critical weighing of facts," understand Jesus as a mere man. But He is not, therefore, a stranger to us. All that we need for the soul He gives us; we may live to know Him with the deepest intimacy, and to hold fellowship with Him in doing His will; His purpose is the sphere of our life, if His grace has saved us.

APPENDICES.

APPENDIX A.

THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

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THE KINGDOM OF GOD.

THE Kingdom of God is the etherealised or spiritual form in which the nation of Israel figures in Christ's theology. From the very outset of the theocracy, God had been proclaimed as King in Israel. The basileo-theocracy, once it found the right man to serve as God's vicegerent, instead of proving irreligious, gave new depth to the religious loyalty of the people towards God. The conquests, too, of the Davidic empire, under the idealising touch of pious and patriotic emotion, supplied a favourite picture to prophecy. Under the pressure of the world-empires in the Assyrian age,[1] there arose the deliberate prediction of the universality of true religion in "the latter days." Gradually the hope for the Gentiles widened, but always in dependence on the precedence of Israel, and the continuance of Old Testament religion. Prophets of the old covenant had neither the right nor the power to transcend the old covenant. Finally, the Book of Daniel, in which apocalyptic rises to the dignity of a philosophy of history, brought prophecy to an issue by defining the Kingdom of God as an eternal world-empire. Christ, passing over the Apocrypha, went

[1] Riehm, as above.

back to Daniel for this conception, as well as for the title Son of Man[1] (Dan. vii. 13), as head of the Kingdom, and for the conception eternal life (xii. 2), as the characteristic blessing to be enjoyed in the Kingdom of God.[2] The Baptist, at least according to the first Gospel (iii. 2), had already used the same phraseology. On his lips it could only point to the future, and probably to a somewhat chiliastic future (Matt. xi. 3). But he based on it his characteristic warning, "Repent!" and the significance of his lifework (Luke i. 77) was to prepare for the kingdom by teaching men that salvation lay essentially in spiritual blessings. With Jesus the "Kingdom of God" denotes a present reality (Luke xvii. 21; also Matt. xii. 28, and Luke xi. 20; cf. Matt. xi. 4, etc.) In this lay the gracious aspect of Christ's "glad tidings." "Blessed are ye," He said, "for yours is the Kingdom of God,"—as a gift, and as a present possession. No doubt, this is one of the moot points of interpretation; yet, in fairness, there is scarcely room for doubt. The question is complicated by the use of the same phrase for heaven, or for the coming consummation of all things. Such use is very common in the New Testament; hence perhaps Matthew's "Kingdom of heaven," which verbally is probably less authentic than "Kingdom of God." Yet, if the Kingdom of God, which religion brings into the present, is fundamentally an ethical conception, and if ethic tends to project it into the future, we can understand that an eschatological use of the phrase is a natural deflection of meaning.

[1] So Canon Row, in *Rev. and Mod. Theol. Contrasted.*

[2] Another reference to Daniel is to the "abomination of desolation."

In its ethical sense, which concerns us here, the phrase means much more than that God is the author of law, or the source of all power; it implies that a kingdom after God's heart has been erected, that such as are the laws, so are the subjects. Hence we might best express the meaning of the phrase in modern English by translating, "Divine Kingdom." So far as its actual position in the world was concerned, the Kingdom of God coincided with the circle of Christ's disciples. In history, measured similarly by its extent, it will mean much the same thing as the "invisible Church" of Protestant theology; only, while that is defined primarily by religious marks, as being the society which stands in inner fellowship with God, the Kingdom of God is defined primarily by ethical marks, as being the society which does the will of God. The religious position it implies is reconciliation with God, achieved in Christ's spiritual sacrifice (Heb. ix. 14; x. 9, 10), shown in faith, resignation, humility, and triumph, as well as in doing good; as Paul phrases it, in "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost." Inasmuch as it is a religious society, resting on grace, and not on merit, the characteristic name of God, which the members of His kingdom are entitled to use, is not "the Judge," or "Emperor," but "our Father." Thus the figure of a kingdom passes over into the figure of a family, so as to indicate, both that dependence on God is filial, not statutory, and that the members of the kingdom are to act towards one another, and, indeed, towards all men, as brethren. The proper definition of the Kingdom of God is, however, ethical. In this view it represents the task of redeemed humanity,—the whole complex of the duties

of piety and of charity, which are incumbent on Christ's followers. Hence it is that the Kingdom appears as a thing ever in course of realisation, and as an ideal belonging to the future, though present to faith by virtue of the achievement of Christ. Even the member of God's kingdom is taught to "Seek His kingdom first," and is bidden pray "Thy kingdom come." The chief means of this coming of the Kingdom is, on man's side, that every man discharge his own vocation with faithfulness. The main novelty in the ethic of the Kingdom is, that universal benevolence, considered as the mind of Christ, is a religious duty, and that it is to be the conscious or unconscious motive of every action.

Christ, then, chose, in spite of inevitable dangers, to begin His ministry by announcing the Kingdom. This constituted His gospel. Neither His own work nor His own Person,—neither the Atonement nor the Incarnation,—was what He put in the forefront. Once men were brought within the sphere of Kingdom influences, they could grow up into that spiritual condition, which is fitted for knowledge of Christ's Person and work. May we not well be content to begin where Christ began?

"The leading thought of Jesus is not the leading thought in the epistles of the New Testament. This fact may be explained in different ways. Does it imply that the attention of the apostles has been altogether turned away from this most important point of view, so that they can only adopt it in an imperfect form, or in some of its attributes, or when occasion presents it to them? Or must we assume that in their preaching, as founders of Christian Churches, they gave

currency to Jesus' leading idea, and only adopted other grounds of instruction and exhortation for their letters? Or can we discern differences between the different apostles? Is the habit of some explicable on one of the above grounds, and that of others on a different ground? To limit conjecture, let us remind ourselves that the author of the Acts, a comparatively late writer, records of the apostles generally, and in particular of Paul, that the apostolic preaching was a gospel of the Kingdom of God. But, while this man of the second generation is still at home in the original point of view, his contemporary, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, formulates the content of the teaching of Jesus and the apostles in the less definite conception, *σωτηρία*, projects the thought of Jesus' kingship into the future (ii. 3-5), and does not even mention it in his list of the elements of Christian knowledge (vi. 1-2). These latter facts show us the original idea of the Kingdom of God dissolving away. Unquestionably this is to be explained by the prevailing expectation of the second advent, which governs the cast of thought of 1 Peter, and even there has left only indirect traces of the idea of a present Kingdom of God. In studying the Epistle of James we have to take into consideration, that he embraces the ethical contents of the Christian law under the conception of wisdom, following in this the lead of Proverbs and kindred Old Testament writings. He lays great stress upon ethical unselfishness;[1] but, when this is taught

Gemeinsinn, "public spirit." We have no ethical equivalent except the negative "unselfishness." Mr. Hinton spoke of "Altruism,"—etymologically and philosophically misleading.

under the leading conception of wisdom, it is urged as a desirable acquisition to the individual character, and on the ground of individual responsibility to God the judge ; while, from the point of view of righteousness—in the Biblical sense—what is good in individual character and action is so called because it tends to corporate order and well-being. Thus, when Christianity was conceived as a revelation of wisdom, the meaning of the Kingdom of God, as the product of ethical action, disappeared. Finally, John also handles ethical subjects from an individualist point of view. He, too, commends brotherly love on the ground of personal responsibility before God's judgment (1 John iv. 17-18). He differs from James, however, in treating the Christian's vocation by preference, not according to ethical categories, but from the religious point of view of God's causation in grace, from that of the influence of Christ's example, and from that of the motive power of His commandments. This view of religious experience did not predispose him to appropriate Christ's thought of the Kingdom of God ; hence, also, his version of Christ's discourses varies from the original form as pictured in the other Gospels. Still, it will be found, that from another side he approached very near Christ's leading point of view.

"The Acts of the Apostles have told us that Paul's preaching nevertheless retained the original conception of the Kingdom of God as a task for the present. This is confirmed by the fact, that in some passages of his epistles, though in few, we meet with that conception. In Col. iv. 11 he indirectly describes his activity in his apostolic calling as a work 'unto the Kingdom of God. And when he calls his ministry (2 Cor. iii. 9), 'the

ministration of righteousness,' he can only do so because he has plainly before his mind the connection between righteousness and the Kingdom of God. For the rest, the reason why Paul in his letters so seldom touches on the doctrine of the Kingdom, is because his epistles are governed by the various requirements of the Christian communities, considered as Churches. Even in the teaching of Christ we have to distinguish between the setting apart of the disciples to help in the realisation of the Kingdom of God as their special ethical task, and their setting apart as *ἐκκλησία*. The latter word (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17) answers to the Hebrew קָהָל, which describes the covenant people as a people consecrated to God's worship, not as a people consecrated to subjection under His sovereignty, and to civil and moral obedience to His Law. Further, the use of this word on two occasions by Jesus proves that statutory institutions will arise in the disciples' community as an *Ecclesia;* while, on the other hand, the disciples' communion in the Kingdom of God has for an essential attribute, that love supersedes statutory arrangements (Matt. v. 38-42; 1 Cor. vi. 6-8). Finally, although the Kingdom of God is meant to become a fact of human experience, its reality will be verified only to faith; it will never be possible to test it by the direct correspondence of the sensible reality with the motives and desires of faith. But the Church can be seen and heard; every man can distinguish its public worship and its sacraments from the cultus of other religions. Both the form and the contents of Christian worship are matters for scientific agreement, however variously men may think of the value of Christian worship.

"But Christian worship, to be right either in itself or in the person of the worshippers, depends not only on Christian truth, but on the brotherly love of the participants in worship. Worship in the early Church not only had to be guarded against debasing association with Jewish or heathen worship, it had to be kept healthy by a right attitude of the members of the Church towards each other. Hence the many ethical admonitions and rebukes, which the epistles of the New Testament employ for the suppression of error, and for the fostering of Christian faith. But why is such teaching never directly based on the principal ethical category, on the Kingdom of God? Why has Paul himself touched upon it only, as it were, in an interjection? First of all, we may reply that the writers had no intention to give complete ethical instruction in the scientific sense; we might add that the more firmly grounded one is in first principles, and the surer one is that others accept them, the less does one need to speak of them. And we must not forget that the very nature of the Kingdom of God allows of basing ethical instruction upon thoughts which are only subordinate parts in the Kingdom as a whole. For every branch of the ethical unity has the value of the whole. Not only the Kingdom of God, as the ethical organisation of all the human race, is the direct aim in conduct; every detail involved in the interests of humanity—personal virtue, the purity of the family, or that of any other of the narrower circles in life—may be set up by itself as an aim. For an ethical end is an ethical end, in virtue of being the means to other ends, and it can claim all other ethical ends as means to itself.

"Still, it is plain that James, John, and, very clearly,

the author to the Hebrews have forgotten the ethical thought of the Kingdom of God, and have retained the conception only to express by it the future blessedness of all saints. We cannot fail to see in this usage a difference between the circle of the apostles' thoughts and that of Jesus' thoughts, or to see in this difference a loss. What historical explanation can be given for this descent from the lofty elevation of Jesus' view of life? It is due, I think, to a continual solicitude for the needs of the Churches, set as they were in the midst of a polished but hostile world. Jesus, in preaching the Kingdom of God, showed the universality of the Kingdom, it is acknowledged, by the command, 'Love your enemies.' Emphasis is laid on this command on the ground that natural men are capable of brotherly love, so that it in itself does not evince a supernatural morality. But the Churches, united in the confession of God as Father, and of Jesus as Messiah, had as their first task to secure moral fellowship between their members. The inspiring force of religion, which had united the Christians into congregations, might be great; but experience proved that readiness to associate together in worship did not imply an adequate natural disposition to brotherly love. A long course of self-discipline was needful before harmony could be hoped for. And at the same time it became apparent that, if love for enemies and persecutors was ever so far developed, yet the aim of Christian missions was to change enemies into brethren, in order that, within the Church, they might be trained in the righteousness of God's Kingdom. Since, then, care and development of the Churches must seem the indispensable means for the development of the Kingdom of God, the Christian's

nearest duty seemed to be to seek the highest perfection of the Churches. And since the Churches, in order to worship aright, needed training in the supernatural righteousness of the Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, as the aim, fell into the place of a means for the prosperity of the Churches. The two functions of the Christian Church, ethically to labour for the Kingdom of God, and publicly, in stated forms, to worship God, are separate functions; theory suggests that they are mutually dependent, and the facts from the history of the Church, which we have been considering, prove that they are so,—prove that they are alternately means and ends.

"But the use in the epistles of training in the righteousness of the Kingdom as a means for the enrichment of congregational worship involves a pervasive narrowing of the field of vision compared with that of Christ. We see this narrowing when love to the brethren is named as the highest Christian duty," [1]—*i.e.*, the universalism of Christian duty is already in danger of being forgotten.

I cannot refuse myself the pleasure of a quotation from a different source.

"Roughly delineated, the great central fact of the Christianity of the educated middle classes is personal salvation. Christianity assumes more or less the form of a Life Insurance Office, at which, in return for a certain amount of faith and goodness, you insure yourself against the risk of perdition hereafter. Its two

[1] Ritschl, *Justification*, ii., 293-298. Ritschl quotes Rothe (*Stille Stunden*, 239) as having remarked on the surprising change in the apostles' point of view.

factors are God and the soul; the third, and equally necessary factor in primitive Christianity, the world, humanity, is almost entirely omitted, or comes in as a sort of loose after-thought, as something whose claims ought to be recognised out of gratitude for one's own personal salvation. Fortunately, this feeling is so strong as often to secure the utmost devotion, at least from individuals. But it does not alter the fact that our ordinary Christianity is characterised by intense individualism, the emphatically social and corporate character of early Christianity, 'the Kingdom of God,' as it was called, shrinking to the narrow limits of the individual soul, or of some particular ecclesiastical organisation. Its strength lies in beauty of individual character; in what in modern times would be called moral and spiritual culture, in ancient phraseology 'edification;' its weakness, in a certain unconscious selfishness it engenders, the not very lofty ideal of getting on in this world and the next, and doing the best for yourself in both; and its inherent inability to work out any salvation for the world. The rise of Positivism, or the service of humanity, on ground which was once covered by the full tides of Christian love, but which has long been left bare and unoccupied, I think points to the truth in its broad outlines of what I say.

"On the other hand, the great central fact of the Christianity of working-men is, what after all must ever be the central fact of Christianity whatever else we may make of it, a life poured out for the good of others, and personal salvation as a means to that. . . .

"But is it not possible for these two types of Christianity, each imperfect without the other, to coalesce;

for the moral and spiritual culture of the one to take up into itself the service, the self-devotion, and self-spending of the other, and so from the broken light of true Christianity to orb into the perfect 'bright and morning' star, which would herald a new dawn, not only for the working classes, but for all classes alike? Cannot each of us do much to bring in a fuller, truer Christianity, which will draw all men into it, a Christianity that possesses the three essential factors,—God, the individual soul, and the world? . . .

"I believe myself that an immense movement is already setting in towards a more organic Christianity; a Christianity that will recognise what, thank God, many individuals have already recognised, that we are members of one organic whole, and that the limb can only attain to its true health and joyous activity by losing itself in serving the whole; in other words, by bringing in that very factor, the world, humanity, which we have left out; a Christianity which would build up a moral order on somewhat the same methods as" those on which "science has built up an intellectual order in our life, by training the moral emotions to respond to fact, as men have already trained the intellectual faculties. . . . I believe that the time is coming when 'duty,' not selfish 'rights,' will become the watchword of humanity, and when a fuller Christianity will be able so to mould public opinion that the man who lives simply for his own pleasure and amusement, in enjoyment of the rights of property, will be branded as a man who has lived a pauper at the public expense, and died without an attempt to pay his debts; a time when it will be as much ground into a man by education and religious influences that he has got to fulfil his obligations to

humanity, to others, as it now is that he has got to fulfil his obligations to himself and to his own soul. In one word, I believe a Christianity is coming, which will teach us not only our relations to God, but our relations to His world; not only our relation through Christ to God, but also our relations through Christ to humanity, of whom He is equally the representative; a Christianity which will base itself less upon theological dogma, and more upon the facts of life."[1]

[1] Ellice Hopkins, *Work among Working-men*, ch. vii.

APPENDIX B.

THE OBSERVANCE OF SUNDAY.

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IN the text I have not mentioned the Puritan view of Christ's observance of the Sabbath. That view, in accordance with the Puritan theory of Sunday, holds that Christ kept the day sacred because of the perpetual obligation of the Decalogue. The Puritan theory had three parts. First, it regarded Christ as being a religious revealer or religious lawgiver, and at the same time the giver of statutory laws, in a complete system, to Church and State. Secondly, the basis of Christ's statutory lawgiving, as of all His work, was found in the Decalogue, whose perpetual obligation was taken for granted (*e.g.*, in exposition of the Sermon on the Mount). Thirdly, the task of enforcing the statutory side of Christ's lawgiving, both in Church and State, was committed to an authority competent to the task,—to the Christian State. Now, this is a complete and self-consistent theory ; and no one—confessedly or professedly—holds it at the present day. It may seem a small change, that we have abandoned persecution ; but a small change, or the recognition of an obvious fact, may carry very important consequences with it. The acknowledgment of the incontestable fact, that the text of Scripture, as we have it, is not infallible, may revolutionise one's theory of

inspiration. And the acknowledged truth, that persecution is not a Christian duty, but a sin against Christ, and a destruction of the spirituality of the gospel, logically implies that Christ is not a giver of statutory laws to the Christian state.

Of course, this conclusion does not preclude the possibility, that an isolated ordinance of the old covenant might become an ordinance of the Christian Church. The synagogue transmitted many things to the Church. There is nothing, then, necessarily un-Christian in the doctrine of a Christian Sabbath. But it needs proof. We must show the link between the Fourth Commandment and the Lord's Day, before we assert the existence of such a link. We have no right to take it for granted. Unquestionably, indeed, the Sabbath transmitted to the Church the habit of resting one day in seven, and the manner of conceiving of a holy day,—viz., as a day of rest as well as of worship. These conceptions were ready-made in the minds of the first Christians. But such historical reflections do not carry us very far. What then ? It is certain that Jesus never speaks of the Lord's Day, or of a "change of day" in the observance of the Sabbath. It is certain that the Jewish section of the Church kept Sabbath as part of their accommodation to Judaism, or entanglement in it. The Lord's Day sprang up among them alongside their Jewish Sabbath, we can hardly tell how. It is certain that Paul, whose converts met (1 Cor. xvi. 2) for worship "upon the first day of the week," warned the Churches against "a Sabbath Day" (Col. ii. 16) as a relic of Judaism. Of course, to use this passage as a dissuasion from the rest of the Lord's Day is to abuse it. Paul is dealing with the still extant Jewish rest

as a part of the old covenant. But is Paul not theologian enough to have revealed to the Gentiles the "change of the day"? Would it not have been the simplest argument against that particular seduction, to remind his readers, that their true Sabbath-keeping was on the Lord's Day? This passage, though it may not be an insurmountable obstacle, is a very serious obstacle in the way of identifying the Sabbath and the Lord's Day, showing, as it does, no trace of their connection. I may, indeed, throw out the suggestion, whether "Lord's Day" (Rev. i. 10) may not contain an allusion to "Lord of the Sabbath." It would be only natural, if a day kept for Christ's worship, in remembrance of His resurrection, were considered to be at least as truly His day as the seventh day in the Jewish week had been. But everything here is conjectural. We cannot with certainty demonstrate a link between the Jewish day and the Christian. And, when the Puritan theory asks us to assume the existence of such a link,[1] on the ground of the larger assumption, that the whole of the Decalogue is the basis of Christianity and the binding code of Christian life, we must reply, that even the advantage of being able to adduce the Fourth Commandment as a direct argument for reverent resting on the Lord's Day—and I do not deny the value of that argument—may be purchased at too great a price. The theory in question obscures the most essential elements in Christianity. It obscures the supernatural character of Christ's lawgiving, as

[1] Far safer is the suggestion of Lechler (*Stud. u. Krit.*, 1854), that the Sabbath as "made for man" may be rooted in the creative order "from the beginning," and, therefore, may be a natural duty.

evinced in His refusal to be "made a king," or to be "a judge or a divider." It ignores that His lawgiving is ethical, not statutory. It ignores that His lawgiving is paradoxical, not literal. It is simply part of that unhappily recurrent effort, to assimilate the Christian to the Jewish Church, which has done more to retard the progress of the gospel than any other error into which Christian men have fallen, and which has for its logical result to destroy the claim of Christianity on the conscience and the judgment of the race.

1. We must hold, then, with Archdeacon Hessey,[1] that the Lord's Day is to be commended to men's consciences on distinctly Christian grounds. In the last resort every duty must be recommended to Christians on such grounds. But, while Dr. Hessey appeals to the authoritative example of the Apostolic Church, I would appeal explicitly to the authority of Christ. Not that His is not, in every case, the ultimate authority which determines a Christian man's duty; not that the example of the Apostolic Church is a doubtful utterance of Christ's authority; but there is more in that authority of Christ which founds the Lord's Day than the bare utterance of His will. The example of the Apostolic Church may be not only willingly but intelligently followed; we as Christians are in a position to appreciate and adopt the motives, which constrain Christians in every age to set aside the Lord's Day for worship. The Lord's Day, infant baptism, even the binding claims of the visible Church, are all in a similar position. A certain weight may be given to them by proofs of apostolic practice,

[1] Bampton Lecture for 1860.

though little from apostolic teaching; but the authority of Christ is seen clearly in them when they are rightly apprehended, and understood as deep-rooted in the nature of Christian principles and of Christ's revelation. And so

2. The day of religious rest is a permanent duty, since the physical and religious nature of man permanently requires it.

3. Christ, in founding a universal religion of fellowship, has reinforced that permanent duty, and taken it up into the sphere of the Christian life. More especially in founding the Lord's Supper, Christ by implication called together His disciples for a weekly meal at His table, thus consecrating the week, and laying claim to one day in it. On this point I am glad to be able to refer to Dr. Hessey's excellent remarks.[1] The choice of the first day is an eminently Christian choice, even if no unrecorded revelation was its motive; for those who find the beginning of new life in the day when Christ rose, have learned to put faith in the risen Saviour, as Head of the Church and as Lord over all things, and to look to Him for redemption.

4. Further, Christ's example in treating the Sabbath is our model for observance of a day of religious rest. On this point I must part company with Dr. Hessey.[2] We must allow, indeed, that Christ's obedience was paid to a day which can scarcely be proved to be identical with our day of rest. But surely, Dr. Hessey's quaint remarks upon the spirit in which Christ kept

[1] Lecture ii., p. 51, 4th edition, 1881.
[2] Lecture iv.

the day as one opposed to strictness, and upon our full Christian emancipation as entitling us to a still less degree of strictness, and to still greater cheerfulness,—surely this is very inadequate treatment, from a very unworthy point of view. One may hope that the amounts of cheerfulness and of worship need not vary inversely. Christ is our example, then, because He kept a day of religious rest in the highest possible way. And He did so, because, being Christ, He could keep it in no other way. The Son of Man must be Lord of the Sabbath. And hence His example—if we would only pay it attention—speaks most eloquently of our duty; of the importance of kindness, of the necessity for lenient judgment of others, of the right and duty to regulate trifles according to one's own conscience,—and, of all these, as parts of the honour to be paid to God on the day that is sacred to rest and to His worship.

In regard to Christ's example, I must differ equally from those who think of it[1] as designedly intimating in an obscure way the abrogation of Sabbath. Christ's conduct was neither a mere accommodation, nor a mere antedating of Christian rest. It was both; it was the last of the old, and also the first of the new. We see this in the fact that Christ appeals, in regard to the Sabbath, to moral and spiritual principles. He repeatedly made such appeals with the result of abrogating ceremony. And He might easily have intimated the abrogation of Sabbath, on grounds of principle, to the inner circle of His disciples. It would have been as easy for Him, as it was afterwards for Paul, to alight

[1] See above, ch. iv.

on the principle, "Distinction of days is an adiaphoron." But the principles He actually alighted on were the principles, "It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath;" "Mercy is better than sacrifice;" "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath;" and "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath,"—*i.e.*, as I have ventured to conjecture—"To keep the Sabbath rightly, I need and have freedom in small things, being Messiah, and what I have I give my disciples." Christ's ethical principles, then, point to His purifying, not abrogating, the Sabbath. As being ethical principles, they avail for the rest of the first day of the week no less than for that of the seventh. Again, if Christ's Sabbath observance had been a mere accommodation, would He not have observed without controversy what was so soon to pass away, on His principle, not "to offend them"? He did not act so; the day was for Him more than a mere external observance; regarded from the highest point of view, it showed itself more than a ceremony—the fitting precursor, if no more, of the Lord's Day. Thus Christ sets us an example. And yet, we need not assume that, in His life of humiliation, He consciously looked forward to the Sunday of Church history. All biographical detail in regard to Jesus is inscrutable; He is too great for our search. Being Jesus, He must needs observe a day of religious rest in the highest possible way; and, therefore, inevitably—by being Jesus—He sets Christians an example of Christian rest.[1]

[1] The question of the relation of the State to Sunday gives trouble from time to time. We shall have most hope of settling it, however, if we steadily bear in mind that it is a secondary question. Christ's first claims are on the Church;

the Church is the first subject of His authority in regard to the Lord's Day; the duty of the State must be secondary. We cannot place this duty on legal grounds. Dr. Hessey seems to account for it on a paternal theory of government. I would connect it rather with the duty of protecting individuals from social tyranny, and with the public need of rest. If we base the State's duty, to enforce a measure of rest, directly on religious grounds, what is our platform but the persecutor's?

APPENDIX C

CHRIST AS FOUNDER OF THE VISIBLE CHURCH.

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TWO errors must be guarded against in regard to our Lord's relation to the historical fabric of the Church. The first, that He did not look forward to the Church. The word, it is true, occurs only twice in His sayings (Matt. xvi. 18, xviii. 17), and both times in the first Gospel (but cf. Luke xvii. 3). Still, the attempt to get rid of these passages is purely arbitrary; and the attempt to refer them to the Jewish synagogue is unwarranted by usage, and is out of date. It may be true that in the later passage there is no reference to any but moral relations among the disciples, who were listening to Jesus and were following in His train. Still, the principles He lays down of themselves involve a Church discipline (Weiss), and it, Church institutions; while the attempt (Holtzmann)[1] to explain xvi. 18 by the same sense of the word is meaningless. Even if we do not see in the passage in Matt. xvi. Christ's despair of winning all Israel (Weiss), still, we have had proof elsewhere of His rejection of the Pharisees, and we have seen[2] that that involved the rise of a separate Church. In this passage we rather

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[1] *Protestantenbibel, in loc.*

[2] Above, ch. iii., p. 51.

see direct anticipation of an ordered system differing from Israel's. Such anticipation is implied elsewhere in Christ's gospel, as well as in His attitude towards the Pharisees. Hence both passages, which use the word, show to some extent Christ's anticipation of the visible Church.[1] Our Lord's intention to found it is seen further to a very important degree in the institution of the Supper, a rite which secured [2] that His disciples should hold religious fellowship as a separate society. Finally, the command to baptise [3] equally bears witness to our Lord's wish to found a separate visible society (compare John iv. 1, 2). When *à priori* constructions of Jesus deny that He could look forward to a Church as well as to a second Advent, they betray their own inability to cover all the facts.

But, on the other hand, we must not make our Lord's founding the visible Church the chief thing in His ministry; we must not even assume that He gave it such prominence as would have involved immediate and violent separation between His disciples and the Jewish Church. The leading error in *Ecce Homo* is its exaggeration of the importance of the visible Church, which is identified off-hand with the Kingdom of God.[4] Certainly, every intelligent reader—may one not say, every student of English literature?—is under the greatest obligation to Mr. Seeley's noble book, and most of all for those points on which it most provoked

[1] Compare the quotation above in note A, p. 225.

[2] Compare above, note B, p. 239.

[3] Compare above, ch. x., p. 213.

[4] A ruinous mistake, which, unfortunately, re-appears in Canon Row's *Revelation and Modern Theology Contrasted.*

criticism. That the author should have studied Christ as His personality reveals itself in the Gospels, instead of construing Him as a dogmatic figure, and arriving at results by deduction, is not a blot but an excellence. It is to follow the method of revelation which Christ used. Even the prominence given to morality is a faithful copy of Christ's teaching. And the endeavour to view Christ throughout as founder of a society, is simply the effort to judge Christ as He historically was, as He religiously would be. It is not because Mr. Seeley exaggerates the importance of Christ's connection with the society He founded that he errs, but because he does not make it deep or real enough. "It is this union," he says, "of morals and politics that he finds to be characteristic of Christianity."[1] But, so long as this union is not traced to its religious root, it appears precarious and accidental. We cannot understand why Christ formed a society, or how He cemented it, until we remind ourselves that He came as a messenger from God, and spoke to the soul. The author might reply that he did not mean to do more than discuss Christ's ethic (preface); but to discuss Christ's ethic without recognising—to say nothing of expounding—its religious root, is to play *Hamlet* with the omission of the title *rôle*. Hence it is, that the author cannot do justice to Christ's relation to His community. Continually the Church seems to drop to the level of a mere skilful device. Continually Christ's place seems to be merely that of a good man, with a good influence,—a superlatively good man, no doubt, with a superlatively good influence, but not generically

[1] Preface to 5th ed.

different from others, and with no valid power, or claim, over remote generations of mankind. And, again, the Church being put first instead of the spiritual force which created both Church and Kingdom, the Church is immediately identified with the Kingdom of God; and the joint community has no functions left it except those of a benevolent society, or "lastly" [1] [!], to hand down the traditions of the Founder. Faith, being cut off from God, appears inexplicably as a compendium of all the virtues. The enthusiasm of humanity appears as an arbitrary exaction, or as the accidental result of Christ's greatness, when it is not seen as a religious principle. All religions, however defective, are enthusiastic, or, as Mr. Arnold prefers to put it in his own dialect, "tinged with emotion." Nay, since Mr. Seeley has cut off the enthusiasm of humanity from its connection with God's purpose and with love to God, it appears as mere developed natural feeling; and the positivism [2] is already latent in *Ecce Homo's* exposition of Christianity, which has come to light before all the world in *Natural Religion;* "not because Christianity has failed; but in case it should fail, let us see how far we can do without it"!

I do not forget how much there is in the book that betrays a far higher point of view, *e.g.*, chapter v., with its account of the "immense *obligation*" under which

[1] Ch. xviii., *sub fin.*, p. 213, 15th (cheap) ed.

[2] Both metaphysic and theology must quarrel with the attempt to develop religion out of natural feeling. But while the former, on ground of man's rational nature, negatives positivism, only revelation—only the study of actual religious life—shows us whence the fear of God and victory over the world come, or how they are fed.

Christ laid men, of "the combination of greatness and self-sacrifice which won their hearts . . . the *Cross* of Christ." The author's power of moral interpretation is as unquestionable as his power of literary expression. But we must ask, whether the explicit logic of his theory does justice to all the elements which he has himself recognised. And I think we must answer in the negative.

Closely connected with the defect already pointed out is another. The author of *Ecce Homo* is imperfectly acquainted with Biblical theology; Homer, Plato, Göthe, all are at his command, but, from the Old Testament, hardly anything except a somewhat apocryphal Moses and Abraham of his own construction. Had he known the Old Testament religion, he could hardly so have misread that of the New Testament. Had he better understood the phraseology and thoughts carried forward from the Old Testament, he would hardly have externalised the Kingdom of God into the Church, or explained Christ's power by His forethought in forming His disciples into a society for exhortation and discipline.

While, then, we give all importance to the visible Church, we decline to identify it off-hand either with the Kingdom of God or with a society affected so strangely, by the conditions of an exceptional calling, as the group of disciples which gathered round Jesus. And we decline to accept the announcement of an outward society as the key to Christ's power. We decline to take the effect of Christianity for its producing cause. Nor can we find better words to express our protest than those furnished by the author himself in his magnificent epilogue, "If in the works of

Nature we can trace the indications of calculation, of a struggle with difficulties, of precaution, of ingenuity, then in Christ's work it may be that the same indications occur. But these inferior and secondary processes were not consciously exercised; they were implicitly present in the manifold yet single creative act. The inconceivable work was done in calmness; before the eyes of men it was accomplished, attracting little attention. Who can describe that which unites men? Who has entered into the formation of speech, which is the symbol of their union? Who can describe exhaustively the origin of civil society? He who can do these things can explain the origin of the Christian Church. For others it must be enough to say, 'The Holy Ghost fell on them that believed.' No man saw the building of the New Jerusalem, the workmen crowded together, the unfinished walls and unpaved streets; no man heard the clink of trowel and pickaxe; it descended *out of heaven from God.*"

APPENDIX D.

THE QUESTION OF THE LAW IN THE EARLY CHURCH.

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IT has been impossible to escape the feeling that, throughout this volume, we have been working under the guns of an invading force, or within the shadow of a great contest. The Tübingen theory supposed that apostolic Christianity split over the question of the Jewish Law. As to Jesus' own mind on the subject, Tübingenism knew little or nothing. But it argued back from the supposed circumstances of the apostolic age, and demolished all the Gospels which profess to record the life and teaching of Jesus. Besides Schwegler's notices in his *Post-Apostolic Age*, Baur devoted a special volume to the question of the Gospels.[1] His complaint against previous criticism was that it had been too much subjective, and insufficiently historical. Beginning with the fourth Gospel, admittedly the latest, and certainly the most vulnerable, Baur set it down as a designed fiction. Then, working his way back, he argued for "tendency" in Mark. Written as a series of colourless extracts from the party gospels, it was designed to serve the united Church. Tendency was next ascribed to Luke

[1] *Kritische Untersuchungen über die Kanonischen Evangelien.*

—a doctored churchly version of Marcion's Gospel,—and finally to Matthew. As to historical truth, we are told that there is more of it in the first Gospel than elsewhere; but even here, as the remnants of the Gospel of the Hebrews help to evince, we have to make large allowance for Judaising bias. And this is the diminutive historical result of so long straining our eyes through the inverted telescope! Because one Gospel, and that the last, exhibits modifications in the discourses of Christ, and may plausibly be attacked by a clever advocate, we are to surrender all the Gospels to dissection. No doubt, if we do so, we shall be furnished with a—highly original—history of early Christianity. But Christians desire to learn from the Gospels about Christ. It is the Tübingen school which is willing to exchange knowledge of Christ for knowledge of pitiful Ebionite sects, unaware that the exchange, if necessary, is a deadly loss. Zeller submits[1] that we need not regret to give up the Acts of the Apostles as a fiction, should this fiction involuntarily allow us a good view of the beginning of the second century. Schwegler raises the question,[2] whether Jesus was not in advance of His Ebionite disciples; he is inclined to answer in the affirmative, but drops the question indifferently, as one incapable of being decided. And every page of Baur's work on the Gospels proves that he shares these sentiments.

To a great extent the above views of the Gospels are obsolete among all critics. The set of criticism has tended to strengthen the case for the canon. It has demonstrated the use of our fourth Gospel in the

[1] On Acts, *sub fin.*

[2] As above, i., 148 (orig.).

pseudo-Clementine homilies, and rendered probable that Justin used all four.[1] The Tübingen school itself proved that Marcion's Gospel was dependent on Luke, not Luke on Marcion. In the hands of Hilgenfeld, one of the most cautious and most distinguished of those who adhere generally to the Tübingen positions,[2] "Matthew," as the earliest Gospel of those in the New Testament, is attributed to a universalist, anti-Jewish, Judaising Christianity in Palestine; Mark's Gospel, ascribed, directly or indirectly, to John Mark, is put second, and attributed to a conciliatory Jewish Christianity at Rome; while the third Gospel is attributed to a catholicising Paulinism. Of course, this does not amount to a confession of the historical character of the Gospels. The Jesus of the Church's belief is still displaced, while the modern critic works back from the moderated controversies of the apostolic age to a Jesus of his own taste. Hilgenfeld lays stress, too, on the priority of the Ebionite Gospel of the Hebrews. But, plainly, the virus of the Tübingen theory is hardly to be found in such criticism. Between a universalist Jewish Christianity, a conciliatory Jewish Christianity, and a conciliatory Paulinism, there can be no extreme differences. If it were worth the critic's while, he might recognise the fundamental harmony of the synoptic gospels.

From the point of view of faith, it is of some importance to note what makes the left wing of criticism so blind to Christian unity, so keen-eyed for every difference. The first reason is a denial of miracle. The school which pretends to unique historical impar-

[1] Cf. Dr. Mair in the *Monthly Interpreter* for Feb., 1885.
[2] *Introduction to the New Testament*, 1875.

tiality suffers from this ineradicable prejudice. Rather than a miracle should be admitted, anything shall be true; the miracles shall be late imitations of fabulous early traditions; or they shall be fictions with a tendency; or they shall be got rid of by simple rationalising. But, however miracles are got rid of, a gospel history without miracles is a new gospel altogether. It is a "bundle of holes." The very tissue of it is eaten out; its historical character is everywhere gone. The disagreeable truth may, and ought to, be held up to such critics, that, whereas elsewhere alleged miracles show plainly as legendary excrescences, the miracles of Christianity are strongly probable to any one who will "historically" admit the question: witness *Ecce Homo*. No wonder if those who will not do this continue engaged in subverting the historical character of Christianity. They are pledged to do so. Of course the critics are neither simple enough nor feeble enough to adduce no other reason for questioning received statements than the fact that these involve miracles. Other arguments are advanced, which must have their due weight from Christians. An ingenious process of weighing is industriously carried on; we may hope to learn much from it; but it is done with false weights, and needs correction throughout.

The second reason for the critical remodelling of the Gospel is even more important, though it is much overlooked; it consists in indifference to the religious significance of Jesus. Of course, there are all shades and degrees of this religious and moral indifferentism. In the first Tübingers, it was at an extreme. They show no trace even of Mr. Matthew Arnold's patronising moral sympathy, nor yet of his fine literary taste. Nay,

it does not seem to occur to them that the Holy of Holies of Christian faith exists for any other purpose than to serve them as a happy hunting-ground. Matters have somewhat mended since then. Hilgenfeld, indeed, continues to argue with all the chillness of a speech by Mr. Parnell. But Holsten, who has given a new development to the theory,—his *Zum Evangelium des Paulus und des Petrus*[1] is dedicated to the memory of Baur—carries on discussion with the enthusiastic glow of an article by Professor Tyndall; while Pfleiderer, in the preface to his *Paulinism*,[2] asks, "Ought we not to find, at the root of the strangest Biblical doctrines, a religious idea, natural to the religious spirit, and valid still to-day?" Much is gained by an even partial sympathy with what is to be interpreted. But how partial must such sympathy be, where men see, at best, in the Christian origins a progress "through illusion to worship"! The first Tübingers were Hegelians, and, instead of consulting the laws of religious experience, tried to verify in Church history a supposed law of thought. They were correctly enough Hegelian in representing the first Christianity as one-sided, but surely incorrect in representing compromise as the crowning stage of development. For good and for bad, that mood of mind is gone. The war-cry of contemporary criticism is "historical indifference." But how does that work here? To unbelief, doctrines of theology or of Scripture are a dreary and meaningless tangle of old-world scholasticism. To Holsten, as to Carlyle—his nearest English analogue, but how signifi-

[1] Holsten has since published *Das Ev. des Paulus*.

[2] Translated in Williams and Norgate's *T. T. F. L.*

cant the many differences!—Christian thought is the worn-out raiment of a vague morality. To faith, it is a witness, more or less full, more or less clearly apprehended, to living spiritual realities. The presupposition of Holsten, as of Schwegler or Baur, is that Christianity is a natural outgrowth of Judaism. The presupposition of sceptical friends of development in the Old Testament was, that the Old Testament religion was the natural outgrowth of primitive paganism. Similarly, there is an implicit materialism in the attempt to explain the growth of consciousness as a process in time, or in denial of the priority of thought; an implicit Pelagianism in the attempt to explain the time-causation of conversion; a denial of the priority of grace. All these are flowers from one stock. Holsten, with his views, is confident of understanding everything which he meets in discussing the life of Jesus. On the strength of his *à priori* Jesus, whose thoughts lie well within the limits (as defined by Holsten) of His age, Holsten corrects the evangelists with the most jaunty confidence. Jesus' death, with the aid of a set of illusory visions, accidentally leads to a spiritual religion; while the "immanent God" sits tied up in an immanent heaven, unable either to help or to hinder this extraordinary process. Materialism attributes this orderly and reasonable world to a happy chance; and sceptical interpreters of Christianity, if they cease ignoring its wonderful moral services to the race, find no better category than chance left them as an explanation. The presupposition of faith, in discussing the life of Jesus, is, that He is, in our experience, the source and beginning of all blessing to us. We no more reckon on completely understanding Him, than we reckon on

understanding the process of the beginning of thought or of life,—far less. It is this first postulate of faith, this catholic testimony of Christian experience, which we are asked to abandon in a "merely historical" study of the question. There can be no harmony between such demands and the Christian spirit. One or the other must be chosen. And we choose faith, finding no reason to set aside the supernatural and Divine, but harmonious and majestic portrait of Christ furnished by the Gospels, or to doubt that He bore Himself towards the Jewish Law in a manner worthy of His mission. This is at once the evidence of the phenomena and the postulate of religious belief.

But, when we descend to the apostolic age, we necessarily lower our postulates. The sinlessness of Christ is the very core of faith and of Christian experience; but facts would cry out against an assertion of apostolic infallibility. What we are disposed, as Christians, to postulate, is, that Christ's apostles were Christian; that He was not mistaken in His witnesses; that, to them, Christ and His salvation were the main thing, a ground of union deep below any superficial differences, a life manifested, through their testimony, to every age. The literary remains of the apostolic Church verify this postulate. As we decline to go behind the Gospels to an *à priori* Jesus of scepticism, so we decline to go behind the Epistles to *à priori* Ebionite apostles.[1] It may be impossible to represent

[1] Schwegler, as above, i., 192-3:—"The whole post-apostolic age is Ebionite in its essential character, because in it the Jewish element still (*sic!*) distinctly prevails over the Christian."

the primitive Church as a model happy family; but was there no essential unity, no true kinship, at least among apostles? The Tübingen chiefs say, No; Christianity, though it and you falsely profess "One Spirit" and one faith, is a compromise between hostile factions.[1] And, when Holsten detects an underlying unity, in his hands it is, of course, not religious, but dogmatic. Instead of the Twelve being levelled up towards Paul, by the concession to them of a saving spark of spiritual Christianity, Paul is levelled down to them as a "theistic-teleological Jew." Is this the criticism of historical inquiry, or of foregone unbelief? "He that is not with us is against us."

Of course, so extreme a theory is not without a measure of support from facts. The singular fact at the outset (if the course of history had been what we suppose) is, that the Twelve confined their ministrations to Israel, and continued to live as Jews. This is imputed, in the case for the defence, to the apostles' desire, that Israel, as a nation, should be converted first of all.[2] But the Tübingen school press the fact much further. They emphasise the legal character of the religion of the

[1] "The opinion, that Mark is the most primary form of the written Gospels, rests on the false assumption, that neutrality, in which differences had not yet emerged, came first in the development of early Christianity. The reverse was the case; the extreme of difference [das Gegensätzlichste] came first."—Schwegler, i., 478.

[2] So Ritschl. Dr. Wilibald Grimm (*Stud. u. Krit.* 1880), quoting Keim (*Aus dem Urchristenthum*, 1878), suggests, as another alternative, that they may have awaited a Divine signal, expecting the conversion of the Gentiles to herald in the Parousia, itself thought to be so near at hand.

earliest Christians; they refuse to admit it as a new and important fact, that Pharisees (Acts xv. 5) came to rank among their converts; they call attention to the controversies with Judaising teachers, of which Paul's Epistles to Galatia and Corinth are full, and which are partly acknowledged even by the Acts; they lay great stress on the rebuke administered by Paul to Peter (Gal. ii. 11, *sq.*); and, throughout, they are working up to the data furnished by the pseudo-Clementine literature. Thus they affirm that spiritual Christianity was peculiarly Pauline, and that, in consequence of it, Paul was continually exposed to the hatred and antagonism, not of a Jewish party merely, but of the whole body of Jewish believers.

The first completed version of the theory, and the most extreme, was given in Schwegler's *Post-Apostolic Age*. Here the controversy between two religious creeds is used to explain all the developments of early Christianity, with their culmination in a Catholic Church. It is well known that, like much modern criticism, the Tübingen school threw the greater part of the New Testament very late. Indeed, it did so to a quite extravagant degree, criticism itself being judge. It admitted the genuineness of none of the New Testament writings, which name or indicate their authors, except Romans, 1, 2 Corinthians, Galatians, and perhaps the Apocalypse. The effect of such criticism is to mingle the canonical with extra-canonical writings, and extend the development of the New Testament literature to the close of the second century. Scripture does not pass as the record of the first impressions, and as the first and classical response of a new and glowing faith; it appears as a carefully

contrived compromise, and as the involuntary record of a great controversy. To all writings alike Schwegler puts one question, Are you Petrine or Pauline? And, if not exactly either, are you Petrino-Pauline, or Paulino-Petrine, or what sort of adroit conciliatory mixture are you? The poor Muse of History, put "to the question" in this fashion, has no opportunity to speak for herself. Instead of an interpreter of nature, she finds she has fallen into the hands of an Old Bailey cross-examining counsel. We seem to hear the pulleys creaking, and even to see the showman pushing the puppets about, as we read Schwegler's version of Church history. Not only every book, but every churchman or party, is classified as Pauline or Petrine. Gnosticism, on the whole, is "extreme" Paulinism. Montanism, to which Schwegler devoted a special work, is regarded, mainly on the ground of its ecstatic character, as an intensifying of the chiliastic fervours of Judaising Ebionism. We may say, indeed, that Schwegler cannot recognise Christianity, except where he sees, or thinks he sees, Paulinism. Finally, having jerked his puppets as far as possible asunder, he has to jerk them together again. The forces, which he recognises as, in the end, making for unity, are, though on a small scale, *veræ causæ*,—Jewish fanaticism and persecution, the pressure of heresy, the Roman instinct; but it is characteristic of the school that they are all external forces, and that, when Tübingen writers try to enumerate the Christian instincts which made for union, they fall into the most laughable platitudes. Schwegler's analysis of Catholicism, "The element of unity is Petrine, that of universality Pauline," is a good illustration of the abstract generalising or external

reflection, which, with him, displaces objective study of the course of history.

Of course, all this does not exclude great cleverness, or the occasional making of strong points. It appears to the present writer that Schwegler makes one of his strongest points in his attack upon 1 Peter. On the assumption that it must belong, if genuine, to a late period in the Apostle's life, he argues with great force against the possibility of its being written either at the eastern Babylon, or at Rome; and, on the analogy of 2 Peter, which is taken as the last and most conciliatory of all the utterances of Ebionism, he is able to explain it as a "conciliatory" or rather [fraudulently] "apologetic" defence of Paulinism (v. 12). I need not remark that this criticism would fail to touch the book on Weiss's view, that it is early, could that view be made good. More obvious points within the New Testament in favour of Tübingenism are, the peculiar character of Acts, with its close parallel between Peter and Paul, with its curious reticences and emphases; and the Epistle of James, which Schwegler, however, sets down as "mediating," spurious, and late. Outside the New Testament the existence of the pseudo-Clementine writings is the obvious stronghold of the theory.

But the point where the battle raged most keenly was the narrative of Acts xv. Baur (in his *Paul*), Zeller (*On Acts*), and Schwegler,[1] all waste a great deal of indignant eloquence on this passage, assuming that it affects to record a final settlement of the relations between Hebrew and Gentile Christians, and that

[1] All translated in Williams and Norgate's *T.T.F.L.*

accordingly it is irreconcilable with the Pauline epistles. It is hardly too much to claim, that on this subject they have been beaten, point by point. Lechler[1] and Ritschl[2] have no difficulty in showing, that Gal. ii. 2 implies two separate kinds of conference, or that the "decree," which tacitly presupposes the continued observance, by born Jews, of the Mosaic law, brought nothing to a settlement except for the moment. Both parties looked with trust to the future,—to the speedy conversion of Israel (and the Parousia?),—to the conversion of a world of Gentiles, as took place. The decree was enough to settle, that Judaising in Gentile Churches should be put down, not patronised, by the Twelve Apostles; it did not settle, it did not contemplate, the circumstances of mixed communions.

Pfleiderer himself admits all this, though he supposes that later the breach became fixed and permanent. He denies the authenticity of the decree, however, though he ascribes its position in Acts, not, like the first Tübingers, to fraud, but to those natural instincts of tradition which credit the past with the authorship of existing customs. Hilgenfeld regards the decree as a concession made by the author of Acts to the standpoint of John in the Apocalypse. In regard to the genuineness of the decree, much depends on the exegesis of 1 Cor. viii.-x. Did Paul regard eating meat offered

[1] *Apost. u. Nachap. Zeitalter*, 1857. See below, p. 281.

[2] *A. K. Kirche.* Ritschl supposes that there could not even be fellowship at the Supper between Jewish and Gentile Christians. It seems doubtful if such exclusiveness can be verified of Jews other than Pharisees. Yet cf. Acts x. 28, etc.

to idols as, in principle, an adiaphoron,[1] and did he make an exception to this rule for the sake of weak consciences, when he forbade its use? Or did he regard it, in principle, as a "fellowship with demons," and, by way of exception, merely forbid his converts to nurse scruples about using meat offered for sale in the open market, or supplied at an entertainment by a heathen friend, on the chance that it might have been consecrated to an idol? On the first view, Paul ignored[2] the arrangements of the decree. On the second view,[3] he put it in force in his own way, stating his grounds for maintaining its provisions. And such conduct is consistent with the circumstances of the case. The Jerusalem conference was neither an Œcumenical Council, nor a General Assembly, but a

[1] As is held, unfortunately I think, in Mr. Findlay's very able paper in the *Interp.* for Feb. 1885, on "Law, Liberty, and Expediency."

[2] As Farrar, who defends both the genuineness of the decree and Paul's right to disregard it. But he is not warranted (*Paul*, i., 431) in identifying the subject of 1 Cor. viii. with the subject of Rom. xiv. The "weak" of Rom. xiv. are opposed to the use of flesh as such, and are probably the same party who, having advanced to a schismatic intolerance, are denounced in Col. ii. 21. Farrar further alleges that the decree (p. 432) never passed into Catholic discipline. He appeals to "the Western Church," citing Augustine (*c. Faust.*, xxxii., 13). For the opposite view Ritschl cites the Apostolic Constitutions (canon 63, *A. K. Kirche*, p. 251). Baur (*Paul*, i., 5) and Pfleiderer (concluding chapter) agree in holding the permanence of what is stated in the decree. Lechler holds that Paul's regard for weak consciences is equivalent to maintaining the decree. It is certainly regretable if Paul must in fairness be classed among those who "teach to eat things sacrificed to idols."

[3] Ritschl, Weiss.

congress of plenipotentiaries. Paul accepted the decree,[1] because he sympathised with its provisions; he kept it in force by his own authority, not as the decree of Jerusalem; for Jerusalem had no jurisdiction over his Gentiles; and to maintain the latter in their autonomy was one side of the struggle for a free gospel. Baur and his school see nothing of this. They are not satisfied with—correctly enough—reducing the Christ party to the Petrine party (cf. 2 Cor. x. 7); they must reduce the references to Apollos,[2] at least in part, to a "figure" (1 Cor. iv. 6), or rather to a euphemism, designed to keep the name of Peter from always intruding. The "spiritual" are not to rank as advanced thinkers, but as possessors of Ebionitish "spiritual gifts." As usual, Tübingen colour-blindness can see only what it wishes to see. Aaron's rod swallows up all the other rods. For those who see distinctly, Farrar has proved that Paul's anxieties in 1 Cor. are predominantly, though not exclusively, concerned with the party who used the name of Apollos, and that it was their opinion, expressed in the letter to Paul, that "they all had knowledge," that "an idol was nothing in the world," and so on. To think otherwise is to throw away the key to the epistle.

Schwegler had traced the development of early Church history in two lines,—one at Rome, one in Asia Minor. In Hilgenfeld's version of early history, the

[1] A compromise is maintained independently by Grimm (as above),—it had been tentatively mooted by Weizsäcker, whom Grimm cites,—that James and his school promulgated the decree, independently, some time after the Jerusalem congress (Acts xxi. 25), and that the one error of Acts is in throwing this back to the time of the Apostolic interview.

[2] Baur, *Paul*, part ii., ch. 2; vol. i., p. 294, Eng. tr.

traces of conflict at Rome, like the traces of party colouring in the Gospels, are as good as gone. First Clement, which Schwegler had hocussed with his usual recklessness, is a strong bulwark against the attacks of romancers upon Church history at Rome; but even the Gospel of Mark, 1 Peter, and the Pastorals, all of which are assigned by Hilgenfeld to Rome, show no trace of internal conflicts. Thus practically Rome must be struck off the list of places where a sane criticism detects proof of conflicts between Paulinism and a Judaising Christianity. This is a point whose importance must not be overlooked. From the Epistle to the Romans down to the pseudo-Clementines, Baur and his followers had traced a virulently polemical Ebionite faction at Rome. Even the fact that the pseudo-Clementine writings admit baptism as a substitute for circumcision, was regarded merely as a concession,[1] not as the self-betrayal of a weak and heretical faction. If the Tübingen theory must still be reckoned with as a formidable power, all parties should in fairness remember that one of the chosen strongholds of the theory, the polemically Ebionite character of the Church at Rome, has been taken by storm.

Still, it is surprising that enemies of Tübingenism should ever allow themselves to speak of it with contempt. It is very far indeed from being effete or obsolete. Because a theory has been driven from extravagant assertions, why should we underrate its power when it re-appears in a moderate and plausible shape, with every weak point reinforced and every crevice guarded? If Hilgenfeld's book marks a retreat

[1] Baur, *First Three Centuries*, Eng. tr., ii., 106-9.

on several lines, upon others it renews the attack with great vigour. Among Paul's genuine epistles, Hilgenfeld reckons 1 Thessalonians, Philippians, and Philemon, along with[1] the four "principal epistles," whose genuineness was already admitted. But, in dealing with 2 Corinthians, he throws a stronger light than ever on the conflicts Paul had to undergo. Here there has been a change in exegesis. Baur maintained[2] the older view, that 2 Cor. ii. 6, and other passages of that Epistle, refer to the same case as 1 Cor. v. He supposed that Paul's sentence of excommunication, though the Apostle thought it supported by a special revelation, had failed to command the approval of the Church at Corinth, and that the conciliatory phrases of 2 Cor. are designed to mask the apostle's enforced approval of a much lighter sentence. Hilgenfeld holds, what is apparently more correct, that Paul, after writing 1 Corinthians, had received intelligence of further and fiercer attacks upon his apostolic dignity by the Petrine party, furnished, as its leaders were, with "letters of commendation;" that he then, in the first heat of indignation, had despatched a severe letter, though he afterwards for a time regretted his severity; and that he refers to this lost epistle, and to the slanderer of his apostolate and gospel, throughout 2 Corinthians. When it is once established that 2 Corinthians refers to different circumstances from those of 1 Corinthians, and to a deeper rift in the Church of Corinth, the party of the Petrine gospel comes to wear a more serious aspect. Hilgenfeld strongly maintains that such letters

[1] He also defends the integrity of Romans.

[2] *Paul*, i., 297 *sq.*, Eng. tr.

of commendation as its leaders possessed could only proceed from the Twelve.[1] In fact, the modified version of Tübingenism still supposes a fatal and final separation, after the quarrel at Antioch. The second main defensive position is, therefore, this,[2] that we have no proof, and no reason to suppose, that the rabid Judaisers of Corinth did not forge or else abuse their credentials. They may have had letters, but not from Jerusalem, or from Jerusalem, but not from the apostles[3] (2 Cor. iii. 1, "from *you*," members of the Church). Does not the phrase "pre-eminent apostles" seem to indicate, that they had been forced to make concessions, and to try to escape with the admission, that Paul was an apostle "in a sense," only subordinate to the Twelve?

At Rome Hilgenfeld is constrained to recognise great harmony among the different sections of the Church. But in Asia Minor, where Schwegler traced a more theological, less practical, equating of differences, and where, perhaps, external evidence gives less trouble, Hilgenfeld presents a formidable case. He asserts the apostolic origin of the Apocalypse. Schwegler's doubts as to the originality of the epistles to the seven Churches disappear without leaving a trace. On the assumption that Paul conceded in principle the eating of meat offered to idols. his school is identified[4] with the Balaamites. Who else, asks Hilgenfeld, could

[1] So, too, Pfleiderer.

[2] "That the Twelve or James ever supported the demands of this Judaising party, the Tübingen school has not been able to prove." Weiss, *N. T. Theol.*, p. 143, Germ.

[3] So Grimm, as above.

[4] Though Hilgenfeld kindly spares us Volkmar's suggestion, that the "false prophet" is Paul in person.

have claimed to be an apostle (ii. 2)? Paul's party had been strong at Ephesus, but is now beaten down in its stronghold. As a struggling minority it puts out versions of its creed, from time to time, in the Epistles to the Colossians and to the Ephesians. The destination of the latter early became matter of doubt, but only because it was felt that the real Paul could not have failed to send personal greetings, and to write with the particularity of personal knowledge, in addressing a Church which knew him so well. Finally, by a bold stroke, the name of John—of John, the strongest enemy of Paul, the Boanerges of the Apocalypse—was stolen without a word for 1 John and for the fourth Gospel. These two books may have been written by one author in the order in which they have been named. They completed the counter revolution. Paulinism, as at that time understood, was again dominant in Asia Minor. John was made to speak the language and sanction the doctrines of his foe.

In this version of the theory there is less imputation of deliberate fabrication than with (*e.g.*) Schwegler, who seems to think that Petrinists and Paulinists were engaged in a trial match, which could lie the hardest. There is less imputation of fiction; still there is much. Pfleiderer, so far as one can learn from his *Paulinism*, imputes less. Even in Acts he supposes that any historical inexactitude is due to the mere set of tradition. The speeches only he regards as freely composed, in the manner of ancient historians. Another point we notice in Hilgenfeld's construction is, that the great controversy has ceased to be a key to open every lock. He brings down 1 Peter to a late date, mainly because of its alleged reference to persecution under Trajan;

other New Testament writings, mainly because of alleged references to Gnosticism.[1] Of course, it is important for Hilgenfeld's position to get rid of the historical figures (as we contend ; the traditional figures, he would say) of Peter and John, as well as of their literary remains. Still, many of the opinions mooted, if freed from all tyrannical theories as they have already escaped from one, are subjects for frank discussion among believers in the Christian revelation. Written as they were in an age exceedingly given to pseudepigraphy, we cannot assert that it is impossible that some of the books of the New Testament should be pseudepigraphic. Their reception into the canon by the early Church can prove as much as it has ever proved ; it proves that they are edifying, but not necessarily that they were written by the authors whose names they bear. We must not make the postulates of belief ridiculous by overstraining them, or deny our Protestantism by turning religious faith into a slave, bound over to fetch and carry in the service of tradition. The Church has a right to demand that the problems of the higher criticism shall be studied by men alive to the deep interests involved, men of suitable caution and of religiously scrupulous candour. These problems cannot be entrusted to those rejecting the gospel, and blind with the blindness of outsiders, who have begged the whole question by a prejudice denying the miraculous. Finally, the Church may ask that probabilities

[1] It would be useless to attempt here any sketch of the attacks or of the defence. But, when writings of the early Fathers are quoted, to show that there were Judaising parties in the Church, we may reply, that this gives no proof of the filiation of such parties to the Jewish apostles.

be received as probabilities, and conjectures not announced as facts. On the other hand, in these perilous days the ship of faith must not be loaded with deck cargo. Points of traditional opinion may often in the long run be vindicated as points of correct opinion; they must not be indolently and treacherously smuggled in among the points of faith. Still, even detailed questions of literary criticism will be affected by sympathy with religious ideas. If Pfleiderer's fine faculty for dogmatic analysis had been matched by as keen a feeling for true religious insight, he could hardly have placed 1 Peter where it stands in his book,—under the wing of 1 Clement.

It has already been remarked that Holsten, followed by Pfleiderer and others, gives a new development to Tübingenism by a study of Paul's theology in connection with his conversion, and[1] in the interests of naturalism. There are points of difference between Holsten and Pfleiderer; but they are more apparent to the writer than to the reader. Perhaps the former is more biographical and subjective; the latter, as befits a Hegelian, more objective and historical. Convinced of the good faith of the Christian martyrs, and, therefore [Holsten], of the reality of those appearances of the risen Jesus of which they spoke,—won upon by their piety, their patience, and their thoroughly orthodox application of prophecy,—Paul was thrown into an agony between faith and doubt, which culminated in a vision that was conclusive to his own mind. Jesus had risen; He must be the true Messiah; salvation would come only through Him, not through that law which had played Paul utterly

[1] *Zum Ev.*, p. 65 *sq.*

false. Jesus' death had always been regarded by believers as a ground of salvation (1 Cor. xv. 3); Paul's personal experiences, and his logical faculty, forced him to regard it as the one ground of salvation, to the exclusion, for the end of justification, of personal piety,—to put "faith without works" instead of "faith with obedience to law,"—and, hence, to go to the Gentiles. For we know that his call to Christ and his calling to be apostle among Gentiles were closely connected in his own mind.

We are concerned here with this theory only in so far as it is supposed to point out a necessary ground of controversy between Paul and the Twelve. And we might, therefore, content ourselves with Holsten's admission, that Paulinism and Petrinism, with different degrees of logical thoroughness, rest upon the same general principles; or we might simply add our denial, that an outsider is competent to decide how far friends will agree, and when they must necessarily fall out. For Holsten and his following must rank as outsiders. We may concede to them religious sympathy, but it is a sympathy ominously curtailed by denial of the miraculous. A living God and personal immortality, even universal restitution, in Pfleiderer—but no Divine Christ; a living God and a nebulous kind of immortality, in Lipsius; an "immanent" God and nothing more, in Holsten,—where are we to stop on this inclined plane? When will radical theologians recognise, that the supernatural is of the very essence of faith? Its degrees or details may be questions partly of logical connection *à priori*, partly of historical evidence *à posteriori*. But, if morbid love of it is foolish, so is morbid fear. To exaggerate it is wrong, to minimise it equally wrong; but to deny it is fatal.

We might content ourselves with a general protest. But the fact, that we are dealing with unsympathetic interpretation from the outside, leads us to question whether the proposed interpretation of Paul can be correct. The doctrine ascribed to him is, that Christ's atonement consisted properly in bearing the penalty of a broken Law. But it is remarkable how Paul, when he seems to have reached the very verge of this statement, turns aside and speaks to a different effect.[1] The new gospel is "a righteousness of God apart from the Law." Even when Paul speaks of Christ "redeeming from the curse of the Law," he does not say "by bearing it," but "by being made a curse,"[2] and has to prove his point by bringing the death of Christ under a general rule stated in the Old Testament. "The righteousness of the Law" and "the righteousness of faith" always appear as mutually exclusive. The truth is, as we have met with an *à priori* Jesus and an *à priori* Apostolic College, so now we are dealing with the *à priori* Paul of indifferentism. We are dealing, not with what Paul believed and expressed, but with what, it is said, he must have believed. No doubt, dogmatic interpretation long ago filled in the outline of Paul's thoughts, on this special point, as the interpretation of criticism has now

[1] "Paul, in Rom. v. 19, describes the death of Christ, considered as means of justifying sinners, as an act of obedience, and also illustrates it by the thought of a ransom, which he combines (iii. 24) with the figure of means of propitiation—though originally quite distinct, and not so interpreted in the Old Testament Law,—and which he then refers to the value of Christ's surrender of Himself to death."—Weiss, *New Testament Theol.*, p. 309, Germ.

[2] Gal. iii. 13. Is the reference to mankind, or to the Jews?

filled it in. But, when orthodox dogmatists hasten to welcome their new recruits, who even outbid them in making the Pauline Gospel a purely formal thing,[1] do they rightly consider what they are doing? Are they prepared to admit that Paul's theology was[2] "a means of escape from the religion of Law in the forms of that religion"? Are they prepared to admit that Paul's reasoning was reasoning in a circle, and that he explained the final revelation of God's grace in terms of a temporary economy? The new construction makes great claims to a genetic deduction of Paul's thoughts; but, in Pfleiderer's hands, along with one coherent fabric of thought, we are led to recognise a mass of inconsistent alternatives. Can a resolving of Paul's teaching into a heap of antinomies imply anything else, than that the observer is at a wrong point of view? But we need not dogmatically deny the alleged historical genesis of Paul's doctrines. What we assert is, that their value for us does not consist in their historical genesis, say, in "Jewish views of the world," but in legitimate, classically Christian interpretations of the Christian facts. That is what we assert of every inspired epistle. That is what is meant by canonicity. We ought to ask ourselves the question, Is it the attempt to construe Paul *à priori*, or is it the doctrine of Penal Substitution itself, which cuts across the line of the Christian life, gives a reading of Paul inconsistent with the broad, simple outlines of the earlier apostolic

[1] Gal. ii. 20 means, according to Holsten: Even while I commit sins, I have faith to believe that they will all be forgiven, through the Atonement of One who loved me, etc.

[2] *Paulinism*, ch. ii., § 2.

gospel, and reduces the argument for sanctification to a mere play upon words ?[1]

There were four points in Paul which must have stumbled the Twelve. The first, the Gentile mission. But that was divinely attested by its results. A second difficulty was the claim of apostleship. What apostleship meant historically, we know from the Gospels; what it meant in Peter's opinion, we see from Acts i. But the position of James at Jerusalem may well have taught the Church to expect a widening of the apostolate. Paul himself confessed that his apostolate was exceptional, while he claimed that it was connected with a special mission to the Gentiles. In his conference with the "pillar apostles" he must have made this claim; he could not be silent about it in any company; and the recognition he received implies its acknowledgment; if it was a strange dispensation, God had attested it. Holsten cleverly denies that Paul's apostolate was acknowledged, on the ground that Paul avoids using the word. But, as Grimm remarks in reference to the phraseology of ver. 6 in the same chapter (Gal. ii.), the language may have been selected to include James, who was not properly an apostle; or it may have been an allusion to language used in the Galatian controversies. And *the recognition of a Christian mission, in which the Twelve forbore to share*, amounted to the acknowledgment of a new apostolate. Perhaps the Judaisers had already discovered this fact,—and already blurt it out,—when they commit inroads on Gentile Christianity (character-

[1] As Ritschl points out, Paul's doctrine is not, "Christ died, you shall not die;" but, "Christ died, reckon yourselves to be dead."

istically, not on heathenism!), and indulge in attacks on Paul's apostolic dignity. Their self-excuse is a self-accusation. We see the fact plainly betrayed when the pseudo-Clementines depict Peter as the real Gentile apostle, who opposes the arch heretic, Simon, alias Paul, all over the West. Of course, the newer Tübingenism still maintains that, even if there was a treaty of Jerusalem, it was torn up at Antioch. But Barnabas, who then joined the Judaisers, and who is supposed by the critics to have been detached from Paul by this fact, rather than by any quarrel about John Mark, is referred to by Paul later on (1 Cor. ix. 6) as a typical teacher of Gentiles. His case is the only one which we can definitely trace beyond the quarrel; and, in his case, we see that there was no permanent rupture with Paul (cf. Col. iv. 10). Grimm calls attention to the fact that Paul, on his part, respected the boundary which had been delimited by agreement. Besides, Paul persisted in collecting for Jerusalem, in speaking reverently of the Mother-Church (Rom. xv. 25, *sq.*, etc.); was Paul the man to alternate contributions and anathemas, or to support "a different gospel, which was not another gospel"? Would any man that ever lived act so? No doubt there are curious phenomena in the Epistle to the Philippians; but the fact that Paul was sometimes able to speak kindly of the better class of Judaisers does not prove that he ever needed to speak in denunciation of the gospel of the Twelve. Occasional errors in conduct are quite a different thing.

A third feature in Paul, which must have been startling to those at Jerusalem, is his theology, especially his doctrine of the Law. The Epistle of James shows us one type of Hebrew Christianity. It is hard to

believe, that a discussion of the question of *justification* (or "salvation," or "profit"), by *works* and not by *faith only*,—in reference to the cases of Abraham (offering Isaac) and of Rahab,—can refer to anything else than Paul's theology and the Epistle to the Hebrews. Justification possibly may have been, in these phrases, a technical question of the Jewish schools; we know, as a fact, that it was the very central question of Paulinism. But let it be proved, if it can be proved, that the Epistle of James is early: then we have this position, that the author has pronounced against the Pauline theology in advance, word for word. How could a Christian living in the joyful contemplation of the "perfect law,"—holding "that a man is justified by works and not by faith only,"—welcome the doctrine, "that a man is justified by faith apart from the works of the law"? Yet James is as peculiarly Christian as Paul, in his own way. He, too, knows the name of God as Father, of Christ as Lord of glory. He presents an interesting parallel (or hint, or echo?) of Rom. v. 3, when he exclaims, "Count it all joy when ye fall into manifold temptation." The Old Testament had been trying, for centuries, to say that, but could not till Christ came. Even the Law is to James "a perfect law," "a law of liberty," because of Christ. Nay, Christ's "fulfilment" (Matt. v. 17) must have made it a "perfect" law,[1] as Christ is the judge (James

[1] Could the words represent one Aramaic root? James, who is closely dependent on the Sermon on the Mount, may well use this term in reference to a fulfilment in Christ's life, not to a mere reformation of the Law. How could stringent reformation turn law into liberty?

v. 8, 9); and the "perfect man" may signify the man of the Christian epoch, who has risen to the level of the perfect law. This may even throw light on Paul's own use of the term "perfect." Nor must we omit to notice that James, in his doctrine of justification, as throughout his epistle, is practical. It is not a false theory, but the case of a man who "says" he has faith, and "has" not works, that James denounces. Finally, as Ritschl shows, James, following many saints and psalmists, finds the spring of obedience to Law in divinely-granted wisdom,[1]—*i.e.*, in a subjective principle of conformity to the Law, in a regeneration through an "implanted word," not in any Pharisaic apparatus. In such circumstances, the question between Paul and James is a question for the schools, not a point of faith. Hitherto, orthodox dogma has compromised matters somewhat awkwardly by holding, with Paul against James, that works have no place in justification; and, with James against Paul, that the law is the rule of life to Christians. Further, James' type of doctrine, with its curious silence as to Christ's death, and as to any doctrine of the Atonement, can only represent one type of Hebrew Christian thought; one of such unique idiosyncrasy, as aptly corresponding to the traditions of James the Just, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to acquiesce in attributing the epistle to any later writer. The Apocalypse is a recognised monument of Hebrew Christianity; into what a different world of ideas its glowing acknowledgment of the Atonement transports us! (i. 5, 6, etc.)[2] So,

[1] Compare above, App. A., p. 223; also further on, p. 284.

[2] See the summary of Ritschl's views, later, p. 285.

if we examine the speeches of Acts, which, on a detailed exegesis, vindicate their originality almost everywhere, point by point, or if we take 1 Peter, or the Epistle to the Hebrews, we find ourselves in a world of Hebrew Christian thought where the Law has no place. There seems reason to believe that James must have been as much isolated in one direction as Paul can have been in the other. Could the great middle party not co-operate with Paul in keeping the Church together? Have we any reason to throw away those chapters of Acts, which tell us that Peter, too, had his share, by the Divine will, in receiving Gentiles into the Church, and in overstepping the Law?

The fourth point in Paul, which might give offence at Jerusalem, was his attitude towards ceremonies. Ceremony as such was consciously an adiaphoron to him, though acts of heathenism could never be adiaphora. In following out his lifework, he was prepared to anticipate the Church's abandonment of Levitism, and to live as a Gentile. This might give offence to "zealots of the law," who made up in zeal, as such persons usually do, what they lacked in knowledge. But this is the point on which we have seen reason to believe that Jesus had explicitly done most to prepare His disciples for a change. They had been accustomed to a prophetic breadth of view in regard to ceremony. In correspondence with this circumstance, the New Testament writings, in no single instance, betray a religious concern for the ceremonial Law. The Epistle of James, whenever written and by whomsoever, does not once touch upon ritual; it moves in a different atmosphere, even while it conceives of Christian revelation as the perfected Law, and must, in all probability,

have been addressed to men busy with the practice of ceremony. It is true, Ritschl supposes that James construed the edict of Acts xv. ethnographically, Paul geographically. This view rests on Gal. ii. 12, with Acts xxi. 20. The latter "perplexing" narrative may be explained by supposing that Paul gave a pledge of personal adherence to the Law, merely as a proof that he did not lead a crusade against its practice, and that he made this explanation at the time. But we are not told this, and, if it be true, it is difficult to avoid charging Paul with over suppleness. The matter did not end well. Nor have we any reason to claim that Paul's conduct was always right. And yet, the Acts give no hint to this effect; they rather indicate the contrary (xxiii. 11). In any case, the difference between Paul and James was on a detailed application of principles; and the fall of the Temple, foretold by Christ, and again by Stephen, would be enough to settle the question, at least of the cogency of ceremony, for all Hebrew Christians, whose zeal had not sunk to schism. Yet, not impossibly, Hebrew Christian practices may have led on to the Christian year. Might not the great feasts turn into Agapæ, and these into Easter, Whit-Sunday, etc.? Might we not, on such an assumption, accept the traditions of Quartodecimanism, harmonising them with the Johannine authorship of the fourth Gospel? John may have kept the Paschal Agape, while thinking it well to explain, that the true Paschal Lamb was Christ.

Among replies to the Tübingen theory, a word or two may be said as to Lechler's and Baumgarten's. Lechler's *Apostolic and Post-Apostolic Age*, a prize

essay written for a Dutch Baptist society (second edition, 1857), is learned, candid, and commonplace. It works on the very natural scheme that Paul was providentially used to develop the minds of the Twelve. This view may quote in its favour the scene at Antioch, when, in Providence, everything turned upon Paul; it also fits in well with the view which assigns 1 Peter to a late period in the Apostle's life, and which asserts Peter's dependence on the Pauline epistles; while it leads to a certain depreciation of the speeches in Acts, as showing an undeveloped faith. But do facts allow of our supposing such dependence of the Hebrew apostles generally on the gospel of the Gentile apostle, or close enough contact to bring about such dependence? Baumgarten, in his *Apostolical History*,[1] replies especially to Zeller's very clever and quite extravagant dissection of Acts.[2] While Lechler supposes that the chief use of the Tübingen theory has been to draw attention to the pseudo-Clementines,—and well has it advertised these fabrications, giving them far more importance in the nineteenth century than they ever had in the second, but surely at a very dear rate!—Baumgarten supposes the use of the Tübingen school to have been, to remind us that the Church of the

[1] Translation, T. & T. Clark.

[2] The real scheme of Acts appears to be, the founding of the Church by the risen Jesus through transference of the Gospel from Jews to Gentiles,—one half Paul's thesis, Rom. ix.-xi.; a scheme reminding us of that of the first Gospel (in Weiss). The scheme is worked out through the Book of Acts in general outline as well as city by city. Why attention is so much focussed on Peter and Paul, or why, even if by selection and grouping of historical facts, so careful a parallel is drawn between them, we can hardly tell.

Twelve was purely Israelite. Baumgarten supernaturalises the whole course of early history. He holds that the continued unbelief of the Jews compelled the Twelve to linger among them, and recalled the apostolic commission of Matt. xxviii. 19; that a new apostolate had to be, and was, founded (Acts xiii. 2); that the new apostolates were bound to live harmoniously and sympathetically together, and did so; and that only the fall of Jerusalem, if even that, released the Twelve for work among the Gentiles. It is difficult to criticise a writer who is so confident, so intimate with the mysteries of heaven, so well able at every turn to quote a Divine decree. But we must refuse the *à priori* speculations of orthodoxy, however able and subtle, as we refuse equally able and subtle speculative constructions in the interests of unbelief. We have no warrant for postulating what Baumgarten takes for granted. So bold a supplementing of the Scripture notices savours of presumption rather than reverence. We may agree indeed with Baumgarten that the Tübingen school have correctly pointed out the first great ganglion in Church history; but the decisive word on the question has yet to be spoken.

Lechler and Baumgarten are apologetic writers. They are thus advocates rather than learners. They stand on the defensive throughout, and assume that the course of history always tended to the best. That is a large assumption, and does not reveal the links that connect the supernatural history of the apostolic age with the erring developments that follow. Ritschl gives such a connection, and it may be interesting to set his deduction of the Catholic Church over against Schwegler's or Hilgenfeld's. Of course, the actual con-

troversy must be fought out on grounds of criticism; but it is important to see how, on the assumption of the genuineness of most of the books of the New Testament, they fit in with the course of history.

Ritschl points out that, while on a defensive criticism we have a firm point of departure in the records of Christ's life and of the apostolic age, and while we possess the literature of the Catholic Church, the intervening or sub-apostolic age lies in an obscurity which has left room for Tübingen theorising. Hence he restates the Tübingers' question in the form, What was the *Origin of the Early Catholic Church?*[1] After explaining the relations of "Christ and the Mosaic Law"[2] in his own way, and after giving a statement of Paul's theology, so as to bring out its essential religious ideas, based on the Old Testament, in their harmony with Hebrew Christianity,—the last thing which keen analysts of Paul's dogmatic would care to do,—he proceeds to a study of the belief of the early Church at Jersualem. This is founded on the Epistle of James, 1 Peter, and the Apocalypse of John;[3] their genuineness he regards as beyond dispute. It is impossible, he thinks, to regard James as polemising against Paul, or as writing at a late period; Jewish

[1] Second ed., 1858. The work had all the interest of a recantation. The first edition, written while Ritschl ranked as a junior member of the Tübingen school, treated Catholicism as a developed Paulinism.

[2] See above, ch. ii., p. 25; ch. iv., p. 70.

[3] The teaching of 1 John, and of the author, in the fourth Gospel, was not in point of fact "a link in the development of the Christianity of the second century."—Note on p. 48. Yet to suppose that the fourth Gospel is spurious "raises more difficulties than it solves."

Christians, to whom the epistle is addressed, would not be affected by Paul; the use of the Old Testament examples, which Paul adduces in a different sense, is too naïve for controversy; and the view of the new revelation as "the perfect law, the law of liberty," as "a wisdom that cometh down from above,"—this view, derived from the didactic poetry of the Old Testament, "naïvely" combining law and grace, shows that the writer had not come in contact with Paul's dialectic separation of the two. By recognising the proper Godhead of Christ (ii. 1), by basing Christian virtue on regeneration (i. 18, 21), by the absence of all reference to ceremonial duties, James entirely differentiates himself from the schismatic and unchristian party who reduced the new faith to a branch of Judaism. First Peter, both by its doctrine of our Lord's person (i. 20; iii. 18), and by its doctrine of His death, is equally removed from Judaising, as well as by its doctrine of regeneration (i. 3, 4, 9, 10, ii. 2). Finally, the Apocalypse recognises the Godhead of Christ (i. 17, ii. 8, xix. 16, xxii. 13); while the type of the Slain Lamb (v. 6, vii. 14, xii. 11, xiii. 8, and often) depicts the death of Christ as the Paschal sacrifice at the inauguration of a new covenant. The Jewish character of the book is due merely to the fact that apocalyptic, as a literature, belongs to the epoch of Judaism. Chiliasm is Jewish, but neither that belief nor the general colour of the book is specifically Judaising. The "twelve apostles" (xxi. 14) are not meant to exclude the Apostle of the Gentiles, but are a round, symbolical number, such as Paul himself used (1 Cor. xv. 5) in speaking of the eleven. Modern attempts to count John among Judaisers are based on a

local tradition,[1] regarding the Ephesian passover, on whose significance its advocates are not at one; its bearing on the genuineness of John's Gospel must, therefore, be doubtful, as well as its efficacy to prove John a less spiritual Christian than he is generally held. Besides, the tradition makes the Christian Easter an apostolic rite, which is doubtful, and is disfigured with the monstrous statement, that John wore the high-priestly tiara.

The Christianity of Jerusalem was, therefore, spiritual, but it was not missionary. Paul's mission, however, along with the action of some Christian Jews, who wished to make all Christians pass through the door of the synagogue, brought up at Jerusalem the question of the relations between the two classes of believers. The decree of the council is identified by Ritschl[2] with the conditions, under which proselytes of the gate—proselytes of the lower grade, who were uncircumcised—were admitted to a certain small measure of religious fellowship with the Jews. And these again he identifies with the Levitical laws contained in Lev. xvii. and xviii., which (xviii. 26) were imposed on strangers resident among the chosen people as well as upon the covenant people itself. Thus he explains πορνεία as referring to marriage contracted within the prohibited degrees, etc. In support of this view, he cites two passages from the *Clementine Recognitions* (vi. 10, ix. 29), which, he affirms, have nothing characteristically Ebionite about them, and, therefore, must be taken as explanatory of the position of the Church at large.

[1] "Polycrates of Ephesus *apud* Eusebius, *H.E.*, v. 24."

[2] I do not perceive, however, that this is an essential part of his theory. The existence of a parallel cannot be questioned.

Thus the decree is meant to bring Gentile Christians into that comparatively tolerable state, to which Jews had grown accustomed in proselytes of the gate. There was hope in this way of gaining the Jews "in every city" (Acts xv. 21). But the commands laid on the Gentiles were not religious duties; they were social restraints. For those who kept no more of the Mosaic law, and confidently hoped to be saved, such customs could have no higher meaning. The Gentile Christians were not mere proselytes of the gate. These had been no part of the Jewish people; not to worship idols was no service of Jehovah; not to defile oneself in certain ways was no positive holiness. If Gentiles might be Christians, salvation must be of faith. Ritschl adds the remark, that the decree, not consummating unity, could not have served as a basis of reconciliation at a late period; he denies that any reconciliation of Judaisers with Gentiles did, or could, take place.

The historicity of the decree is supported by the appearance of the same point of view in the epistles. James (i. 1), in his Epistle, as in his speech, thinks of the Church as Israel, and of Israel as the Church. Peter (1 Peter) speaks to Gentiles (i. 18), yet (i. 1) addresses the Jews as the Church of Christ, and allows the Gentiles to fall in as (full) proselytes. So John in Rev. vii.; and even Paul (Rom. xi.). Again, John in Rev. (ii. 6, 14, 15, 20, 24) is opposing those who, on the strength of a false spiritualism, imitated Balaam's mixed marriages, which were beyond the control of the Levitical law, and so led to "fornication" (Numb. xxxi. 16, xxv. 1; 1 Kings xvi. 31). Paul fights the same battle (1 Cor. vi. 12, 13, x. 7, 8).

As has been remarked in passing, Ritschl explains

the decree as not even permitting religious fellowship at the Eucharist between the two sections of the Church. On this view the transactions of Antioch, in Gal. ii., grow intelligible enough. Paul had accepted the decree; he acknowledged the desirableness of Jews continuing to be Jews (1 Cor. vii. 18, ix. 20), but only where they formed a community, as in Palestine; elsewhere he preferred securing communion with the Church to maintaining his Jewish rights (1 Cor. ix. 21); and at Antioch (cf. Acts xi. 26) he had apparently introduced full and open communion. Peter was in principle at one with Paul (Acts xv. 11; Gal. ii. 16); he had already been led to eat with Gentiles (Acts xi. 3), and he fell in with Paul's arrangement. But, when "certain came from James," who took the separation of the decree ethnographically (Acts xv. 14, "a people out of the Gentiles," xxi. 20-25), Peter and all the Jews, including even Barnabas, changed their habits (ver. 12), while, with his usual ardour, Peter (ver. 14) tried to preserve united Church fellowship by urging the Gentile Christians to accept circumcision. This led to the too celebrated rebuke of Paul. We do not hear later of relations between Paul and Peter. Ritschl, as many have done, quote Mark and Silas (Col. iv. 10; Philem. 24; 1 Peter v. 13) as affording a hope that the apostolic leaders were reconciled. Hope, in regard to a reconciliation with all the Jewish apostles, is based on the fact that the Gentile Church did not arise as a Pauline sect, but was consciously founded on the teaching alike of Paul, James, Peter, and John.

As to the fall of Jerusalem and of the Temple, Ritschl denies that it led the Jewish believers to give up the Law. They may not have ceased to cherish a lively

hope for the conversion of all Israel. But Titus' conquest is allowed to have had one most important result; it led John to change his view of the Christian outlook, and to do so most thoroughly.[1] But most of the members of the Church of Jerusalem had been led by the Epistle to the Hebrews to withdraw from the sacrifices of Judaism, though not from its customs generally, and retired before the catastrophe to Pella, where they appear as the Nazarenes, who (according to Jerome) respected Paul, and (*Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*), while clinging to the Law, acknowledged the high-priesthood of Christ and the abolition of sacrifice. On the other hand, the same catastrophe probably reinforced the Judaising elements in the Church by promoting conversions from the Essenes. Ritschl regards[2] that sect as of purely Jewish origin. They desired to lead a priestly life; but, not being Levitical priests, their sacrifices necessarily were bloodless; *i.e.* they eat no flesh. Punished for their presumption by exclusion from the Temple, they gradually developed indifference, if not hostility, to its sacrifices; and its fall accelerated their conversion. Stray members of them, carried into captivity, had already perhaps joined the Church,[3] at Rome and at Colosse (Rom. xiv. 2; Col. ii. 20. In the Pastorals possibly—note on p. 342—we have controversy, if not with Essenes, with the allied Therapeutæ). In history they appear as the Ebionites

[1] *A. K. Kirche*, p. 146.

[2] This, though an important part of Ritschl's theory, does not seem essential to holding it.

[3] Perhaps this covers whatever truth there is in Schwegler's assertion, that Ebionism throughout exhibits Essene traits.

of Epiphanius, who ought to be distinguished from the earlier Pharisaic Ebionites. Another source of information is found in the notices of the Elxaites. That party Ritschl regards as having attempted a disciplinary reform of Ebionism—though in the way of relaxing discipline—such as "Hermas" carried out in the Roman Church, and Montanus attempted for the Catholic Church at large. It was from the Essene Ebionites that the pseudo-Clementine literature, which Baur's school regarded as inheriting the sentiments of the earliest Church, took its origin. It was a frantic bid for control over the Church's headquarters at Rome, the Jews having been driven from Jerusalem by Hadrian after Bar Cochba's rebellion. That event—the changing Jerusalem into a Gentile colony—was, in Ritschl's view, the final destruction of Jewish Christianity, except among the Nazarenes, and, in a schismatic form, among the Ebionites. Both parties alike came to rank as heretics in the theological judgment of the Gentile Church.

The rest of the first book of Ritschl's work is taken up with a discussion of the earliest theology of the Gentile Church. He denies that that theology can be regarded as a modification of Paulinism; it is professedly based on the general apostolic tradition; and even those who claim to stand nearest Paul in doctrine seriously misunderstand him. This Ritschl ascribes to the incapacity of Gentile converts for understanding the religious ideas which were current among the Jews, and had been developed through the Old Testament.[1] Legalism,

[1] Ritschl (*Justification*, ii., p. 16) severely replies to the criticism of one Graul, already at that time (1874) deceased, who had refused Ritschl's explanation that the fall into Catholic theo-

which is generally ascribed to Ebionite influence, stands in no relation at first to ceremonies, and appears in quarters that are beyond the suspicion of Judaising. This obscuring of the religious essence of Christianity was counterpoised by a speculative Christology, in which, according to Ritschl, the Gentile Church found a means of expressing its distinctive conviction of the absolute nature of the Christian revelation. Justin's name is important, both for the doctrine of the λόγος, and for the development of the formula in which the early Catholic Church passed sentence of condemnation both on Ebionites and on Nazarenes. This was the doctrine, that Christianity was a new law, containing purely ethical injunctions. That formula was meant to embody the New Testament assertion, that Christianity is a new covenant, as well as the current legalism. In the view of the Gentile Church, God, in exchanging the old law for the new, had transferred His grace from the Jews to the Gentiles.

Ritschl had thus argued that the doctrinal tendencies, ascribed by the Tübingen school to the compromise with the Jewish section of the Church, arose in quite a different way. The second book of the *A. K. Kirche* carries out a similar argument for the Catholic rites and ordinances, which afford a parallel to Judaism. It

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logy was due to Gentile misunderstanding of Old Testament ideas, and who had ascribed it to man's native tendency to legalism. This Ritschl finds dreadfully truistic. But do not the two theories need each other? Ritschl names only a negative cause—ignorance of Old Testament religion. That might lead to error—why in particular to legalism? Either from the general strain of human nature, or from its proximate influence in the form of heathen thought.

would lead us too far astray to detail the grounds of the argument. Let it be enough to say that the origin of the (Gentile) Episcopate is referred to the Gnostic controversy, and the doctrine of a special sacramental grace to the Montanist controversy. The Gnostics claimed a secret heretical tradition from the apostles; the Church asserted an orthodox tradition in the hands of the bishops, from the apostles downwards. The Montanists denied the Church's right to re-admit to communion those who had been guilty of mortal sin. And, in fact, the earliest Church discipline (Heb. vi. 4 *sq.*, x. 26, 1. John v. 16) recognised, according to Ritschl, no such right of re-admission. The Church now claimed that right, and justified the claim by the assertion that the bishops, the successors of the apostles, were a priestly guild, with the "power of the keys," that power being taken in the (erroneous) sense of a right to forgive mortal sin. This change, Ritschl thinks, apart from the sacramental theory which accompanied it, was both a forward movement and a fall. It denoted the fading of the hope of an immediate Parousia, and the Church's resolution so to live in the world as to be able to Christianise it. Augustine's doctrine of the City of God completed the change. The Church ceased to look merely for a future Kingdom of God, and sought, as Christ had sought, to realise it in the present; but, unfortunately, the Kingdom was now identified with the corporation of the visible Church. This legalism provided, it is true, for the recognition of man's dependence on grace in the doctrine of sacramental grace; but, in that form, the doctrine of grace is materialised and accommodated to legalism. The Catholic Church has never been able to rise above the mechanical equipoise

of two elements—legal duty, sacramental grace. Augustine's Anti-Pelagianism, according to Ritschl, is purely in the interest of baptismal grace; Pelagius had overthrown the balance of doctrine by his unguarded emphasis upon free will. Only the Reformation, with its denial of merit, and its assertion of the universal priesthood of Christians, returned to that organic view of grace, which corresponds to the teaching of the New Testament and the words of Christ.[1]

[1] Ritschl cannot, however, accept the Protestant doctrine of the kingly office of Christ, as an adequate rendering of Christ's own doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Fully to regain that thought is a task for reformers *after* the Reformation.

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